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Catholics and antisemitism in Germany and England, 1918-1939

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Catholics and Antisemitism in Germany and England, 1918 – 1939

By
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June 2005

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis investigates Catholic attitudes towards Jews and antisemitism in interwar Germany and England. Using a comparative approach it asks for the factors that stimulated or indeed opposed antisemitism: economic circumstances, class, nationality or religion. Its focus on Catholic communities also contributes to the long-standing debate on the continuity of anti-Jewish attitudes and the role of religious anti-Jewish prejudices at a time of racial persecution.

The thesis begins with a comparison of the discourse on the 'Jewish question' in Catholic print media in Germany and England. Outbreaks of anti-Jewish sentiments in both communities differed in time and erupted over different issues, e.g. the 1918-19 revolutions in Germany, or Palestine in England. In both discourses, the stereotype of 'Jewish Bolshevism' emerged as the most frequent charge against Jews. However, the discourse in the German Catholic media was more modern and ideological in its use of antisemitic stereotypes.

The remaining chapters set this 'written' antisemitism in the social and political framework of the two Catholic communities, using a combination of Catholic publications and archival material from German and English state and church archives. These chapters illustrate a perceptible shift to the right by political Catholicism in Germany and the persistence of antisemitism beyond fascist groups in England. They also challenge the distinction between religious anti-Judaism and modern racial antisemitism frequently maintained in existing literature on Catholicism and antisemitism.

The thesis suggests that the intensity and nature of antisemitism depended on structural conditions such as the strength and density of a Catholic organisational infrastructure, the national political system, and the intensity and longevity of an antisemitic discourse. On an individual level, a person's integration in a certain professional and political milieu encouraged the adoption of an antisemitic worldview. These aspects, rather than religious faith or a liberal tradition, made up the national character of antisemitism.

Acknowledgments

Many people and institutions have contributed to the completion of this thesis. While the shortcomings of my work unfortunately will remain my own responsibility, the following individuals and institutions deserve a share of the credit for this thesis.

King's College London, the German Historical Institute, the Royal Historical Society and the Sir Richard Stapley Education Trust have supported me financially at various stages of my work, for which my grateful thanks.

During my PhD, the *Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung* in Berlin invited me to stay for four weeks and participate in their research activities. I thank Johannes Heil for this hospitality and for offering me a productive and stimulating work environment. His insightful advice and his active support for my work at that time are greatly appreciated. I also wish to thank Richard Vinen for the informal chats over many cups of coffee on France, languages, and sometimes the radical right.

My research would have been far more time-consuming without the assistance and patient support of librarians and archivists in Germany and England. Special thanks go to the generous hospitality of Fr David Lannon of the Salford Diocesan Archive. I am particularly indebted to Sister Mary Kelly of the Sisters of Sion who kindly allowed me to use the records of the Catholic Guild of Israel for my doctoral thesis. Stratford Caldecott of the Chesterton Institute in Oxford has been equally generous and allowed me access to and use of the records of the Distributist League and the Catholic Social Guild. Without their generosity and openness it would not have been possible to write vital sections of this thesis. I am also grateful for the assistance and advice of Monty Kolsky, Research Officer of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and the chance to use the records of the Board. I further wish to thank Fr Ian Dickie of the Westminster archives; Fr John Sharp, archivist of the Birmingham diocese; and Mr Robin Gard, archivist of the Hexham and Newcastle diocese, for his advice on Catholic lay organisations in England.

I am very grateful to Kester Aspden who was a resourceful guide through the maze of Catholic archives. His company and friendship throughout these years made archival research quite enjoyable. For assistance, friendship and encouragement during the course of my research I would like to mention Mark Fenemore and Samia Ali-Moussa; Ingrid Rock who patiently read through the draft version of this thesis; and Atsuko Ichijo and Hajo Krombach, and Roger and Pim, for the many inspirational and escapist schnapps-fuelled evenings. I still do not know why Toby Young lost his friends and alienated people, but he might as well have written a PhD thesis. This is an apology to my friends and family for the forgotten birthdays, missed phone calls and other forms of forgetfulness over the years.

My work has profited greatly from the continuously patient advice and support of Richard Overy. Throughout all these years he has managed to advance this work with at times very subtle pressure but more so with his immensely optimistic encouragement. I have greatly enjoyed the many discussions with him and remain grateful for all his help during the PhD process.

I would like to thank my parents and my sisters Gabriela and Marion for their support and assistance in this academic venture. Throughout my life, my parents have interfered little in my professional life and let me follow my own path. At the same time they have always shown, with few words, that they would be there if I needed help.

Finally, very special thanks go to Toby Kretschmer. Throughout the last three years he has put up with my complaints about the state of the world, and with endless postponed weekends and holidays. It is to no small measure due to Toby's persistent enquiries into the state of my thesis that it has finally come to an end. But above all, it was his undeterred confidence in my abilities that was a constant source of encouragement. He has been a true and lovely partner.

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Abbreviations

AKD	Association of German Catholics
BOD	Board of Deputies of British Jews
BVP	Bavarian People's Party
BUF	British Union of Fascists
CCIR	Catholic Council for International Relations
CCRGA	Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany and Austria
CGI	Catholic Guild of Israel
CSG	Catholic Social Guild
CTS	Catholic Truth Society
CVP	Catholic People's Party
DDP	German Democratic Party
DNVP	German National People's Party
DVSTB	German National Defense and Combat League
GEC	Germany Emergency Committee
GH	Gelben Hefte
GKW	G.K.'s Weekly
ICPF	International Catholic Palestine Federation
JPAFA	Jewish People's Council against Fascism and Antisemitism
KPD	Communist Party Germany
LBIYB	Leo Baeck Institute Year Book
MdR / MdL	Member of the Reichstag / Landtag
MP	Member of Parliament
NCC	National Catholic Council (DNVP)

NCCTU	National Conference of Catholic Trade Unions
NSDAP	National Socialist German Workers' Party
NSDStB	National Socialist German Student Union
NW	The New Witness
PDC	Pro Deo Commission
SoS	Sword of the Spirit
SPD	Social Democratic Party Germany
TUC	Trades Union Congress
USPD	Independent Social Democratic Party Germany
ZdK	Central Committee of the Annual German Catholic Conference

1 Introduction

Just in time for the millennial celebrations in 2000, Pope John Paul II received the document *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, researched and written by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Eleven years before, he had asked the Commission to establish the degree of the Church's responsibility for the Holocaust and indeed in the introduction of *We Remember* the pope urges Catholics to take responsibility for sins committed in the past. This atonement was also to include expiation for persecution and discrimination against Jews until the late 1800s, when, according to the interpretation of the Vatican, Jew-hatred was still based on misinterpreted Christian teaching. According to the document, it was in those decades that modern antisemitism arose as a new form of Jew-hatred that was based on race theory and was therefore in its nature sociological and political rather than religious. This modern antisemitism was a belief system contrary to Church teaching and condemned by the Vatican on numerous occasions. The Commission concluded that Christians had been guilty of a long-standing anti-Judaism but not of modern antisemitism, which was ultimately solely responsible for the Holocaust.¹

Though the pope's words were carefully couched, *We Remember* met with a very mixed reception from the public. The conservative curia at the Vatican felt the document violated the Church's infallibility, while reform Catholics and many Protestants and Jews were disappointed about the missed opportunity to apologise for the Church's role in the persecution of the Jews. Christians of good will accepted the pope's attempt to make amends – against the majority opinion of his curia.²

Such a distinction between Christian anti-Judaism and modern antisemitism might look like a minor semantic problem to outsiders, but it has been the central problem in discussions on the relationship between Catholics and Jews. Whether one tries to

¹ David Kertzer: *Unholy War. The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Antisemitism*, New York, 2001, pp. 3-4.

² On the reactions to *We Remember* see Clemens Thomas: 'Kommentar zum Dokument "Wir erinnern uns"', *Freiburger Rundbriefe*, 5, (1998), 161-67. Michael Marrus: 'The Vatican on Racism and Antisemitism, 1938-39. A New Look at the Might-Have-Been', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 11 (1997), 378-95.

understand the ambiguity of Catholic attitudes towards biblical and modern Jews, or sees the Church as a bulwark against or an ally to fascism and National Socialism, one necessarily comes back to the question of how *modern* Catholic antisemitism was. Catholic or Christian Jew-hatred has also been an important component in the general history of antisemitism and the question of its continuity. After decades of research there is general agreement on the continuity of Jew-hatred, but still considerable disagreement about its contents and motives.³

The question of the content and motivation of Jew-hatred is important in this context. This thesis consequently explores Catholic attitudes to Jews and antisemitism in interwar Germany and England, but also looks for the dynamics and motives that favoured, promoted or indeed inhibited antisemitism between 1918 and 1939. Given its comparative nature, the thesis is largely interested in the similarities and differences in these attitudes and the reasons behind possible divergences.

The focus will not be on the Vatican, nor exclusively on the national hierarchies, but rather more on Catholic discourse and Catholic lay organisations. The restriction to Catholics as the objects of this enquiry arose on the one hand out of methodological considerations, which are explained below. On the other hand, this limitation opens up further questions concerning Catholicism and antisemitism, such as the relationship between religious and modern Jew-hatred, and Catholicism's ability to oppose the antisemitic right not only within its own ranks but also on a national level. The example of the English Catholic Church, acting in a free (i.e., not totalitarian or occupied) society, offers the chance to contribute to the discussion about a 'silent Church' in the face of antisemitism and genocide.

The study ends with the outbreak of war in 1939 rather than in 1933 with Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in Germany in order to explain Catholic reactions to the discrimination and persecution of Jews in Germany. How did German Catholic attitudes towards Jews change once antisemitism had become state ideology? And did Catholics in England refrain from antisemitism once the German excesses (such as the Nuremberg laws and *Kristallnacht*) were known abroad? The chosen timeframe encourages the consideration of 'continuity and change' in waves, rather

³ Wolfgang Benz; Werner Bergmann (eds): *Vorurteil und Völkermord. Entwicklungslinien des Antisemitismus*, Bonn, 1997, pp. 11-12.

than in continually increasing forms of hostility, and allowed for some counter-intuitive results in the case of England.

The comparative approach in the thesis together with the chronological framework are both novel in the historiography of European antisemitism and contribute to two important debates in this field. One is the question of how antisemitism of the interwar years had changed compared with the pre-war period. The other explores the factors that made an antisemite at the time: economic crisis, class, nationality or religion.

1.1 The Literature

The Holocaust and the need to explain this mass murder have naturally been the reference points of most studies on antisemitism. Not surprisingly, these have largely concentrated on Jew-hatred in Germany and seemed to flourish and decline with the *Sonderweg* thesis.⁴ The search for an explanation for the Holocaust has recently ventured into further fields of investigation. These include eugenics, the economics behind the genocide, the effects of the war efforts, or bureaucratic rationalisation, while the focus on National Socialist ideology – particularly on antisemitism – as sole motor for mass murder has been gradually sidelined.⁵ However, research into antisemitism has not slackened, but found new importance in the fields of social conflict and protest movements, and the formation and articulation of national

⁴ Works published briefly after the Second World War tended to emphasise the particular German character of antisemitism, e.g., Paul Massing: *Rehearsal for Destruction. A Study of Political Antisemitism in Imperial Germany*, New York, 1949. German exceptionalism has seen a revival since the early 1990s with Paul Lawrence Rose: *German Question / Jewish Question. Revolutionary Antisemitism from Kant to Wagner*, Princeton, 1992; and Daniel J Goldhagen: *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, New York, 1996. Goldhagen's book diagnosed Germans with an 'eliminatorial antisemitism' that essentially made the Holocaust possible. Certainly not suffering of a too restricted definition of antisemitism, his national stereotyping prevents a differentiated analysis into the courses, nature and extent of antisemitism and has left the reader with more questions than answers. On the problems such an interpretation causes see Tony Kushner: 'Comparing Antisemitism: A Useful Exercise?', in: *Two Nations. British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective*, ed. by Michael Brenner and others, Tübingen, 1999, pp. 91-111, (pp. 95-97). For further debates see Robert Shandley (ed.): *Unwilling Germans? The Goldhagen Debate*, Minneapolis, 1998.

⁵ For a neo-functionalist aspect see Götz Aly: *The Final Solution. Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews*, London, 1999. For a very good discussion of these approaches see Christopher Browning: *The Path to Genocide. Essays on Launching the Final Solution*, Cambridge, 1992.

identities. Thanks to this thematic and methodological diversity, research on antisemitism has come to resemble the 'twisted path to Auschwitz' (away from the Luther-Hitler highway). Leaving the national level for regional studies, researchers have emphasised once again the importance of antisemitic ideology over the socio-economic framework and the close link between Christian anti-Judaism and modern antisemitism.⁶

Inquiries into Catholic or Christian antisemitism have always been part of the broader investigation into the continuity of Jew-hatred and a Christian responsibility for Jewish persecutions.⁷ Most work so far has been on Catholicism in Imperial Germany and the Third Reich. Investigations into the role of Catholics in the rise of National Socialism and fascism were at first limited to the highest levels of the Church, namely the Vatican, the curia and the national hierarchies. The Catholic community as such, and its intellectual and political life, have only received attention in the last twenty years. Research into the leadership of the Centre Party and the party's parliamentary work in Imperial Germany had stressed Catholic defence of Jewish equality and freedom in religious affairs but rarely wrote of Catholic antisemitism.⁸ New methodological approaches and a wealth of sources have added important new perspectives to our knowledge of Catholic attitudes to antisemitism. Historians who dug deeper into Catholic cultural life, such as David Blackbourn, Hermann Greive or Olaf Blaschke, recount a different story. Beyond parliamentary

⁶ For an assessment on recent literature see Till van Rahden: 'Ideologie und Gewalt. Neuerscheinungen über den Antisemitismus in der deutschen Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts', *Neue Politische Literatur*, 49 (1996), 11-29. Till van Rahden: 'Words and Actions: Rethinking the Social History of German Antisemitism, Breslau 1870-1914', *German History*, 18 (2000), 413-38. For useful and constantly updated bibliographies on the ever-growing literature on antisemitism see the issues of the *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* and *Antisemitism. An Annotated Bibliography*, ed. by Susan Cohen, Vidal Sasson International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, New York, 1984-(). *Bibliographie zum Antisemitismus. Die Bestände der Bibliothek des Zentrums für Antisemitismusforschung Berlin*, ed. by Herbert A. Strauss, 4 vols, Munich, 1989-93.

⁷ Very good on the roots of modern antisemitism is Helen Fein (ed.): *The Persisting Question. Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, Berlin, 1987. Leonore Siegel Wenschkewitz (ed.): *Christlicher Antijudaismus und Antisemitismus*, Frankfurt, 1994. Johannes Heil: 'Antijudaismus und Antisemitismus. Begriffe als Bedeutungsträger', *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, 6 (1997), 92-114. Jonathan Sperber: 'Commentary on Christians and Antisemitism', *CEH*, 27 (1994), 349-53.

⁸ Rudolf Lill: 'Die deutschen Katholiken und die Juden in der Zeit von 1850 bis zur Machtübernahme', in: *Kirche und Synagoge. Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden*, ed. by Karl Heinrich Rengstorff; Siegfried von Kortzfleisch, 2 vols, Stuttgart, 1968-70, II, 370-420. Uwe Mazura: *Zentrumspartei und Judenfrage 1870/71-1933. Verfassungsstaat und Minderheitenschutz*, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Zeitgeschichte, Reihe B, Mainz, 1994. Armina Haase: *Katholische Presse und die Judenfrage. Inhaltsanalyse katholischer Periodika am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, München, 1975. For an assessment of the older literature see Olaf Blaschke: *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, Göttingen, 1997, pp. 17-29.

reports and public statements of the leadership, Catholic journals and newspapers, sermons, or the Centre's local elections campaigns revealed a strong modern, i.e., economic and socio-cultural, antisemitism in Catholics' attitude to Jews. Research today no longer sees the negative discourse on the 'Jewish question' as a Protestant middle class domain or Catholicism as a 'latecomer' to this discourse. Indeed, James Harris puts Catholic use of antisemitism in political campaigns even earlier – to the 1840s, when Bavarian Catholics clearly voiced their objection to the planned Jewish emancipation.⁹ This Catholic antisemitism grew, according to David Blackbourn, out of a feeling of inferiority and during the time of the Bismarckian *Kulturkampf* out of self-defence. Olaf Blaschke agrees with Blackbourn, but extends this observation further. According to Blaschke, ultramontane Catholics were clearly responsible for creating an ideologised antisemitism. The purpose of this endeavour was both outward defence and the creation of a strong Catholic identity and thereby a cohesive Catholic milieu.¹⁰ In John Cornwall's view such a cohesive identity and ideology had become necessary to build and maintain the Catholic empire from the late nineteenth century.¹¹ Helmut Walser Smith has lately broadened the investigation into Catholic antisemitism inspired by Clifford Geertz's and Benedict Anderson's theories on ethnic and national identity. Smith manages to place the Catholic discourse in relation to that of the Protestant majority. Catholic discourse and its antisemitism are interpreted both as an expression of a cultural identity and as competition for a national identity which was exclusively defined by the dominant Protestant (Prussian) discourse.¹² The advantages of this approach are that Catholic

⁹ James Harris: *The People Speak! Antisemitism and Emancipation in Nineteenth Century Germany*, Ann Arbor, 1994. Stefan Rohrbacher also explains early nineteenth century antisemitism as opposition to Jewish emancipation rather than an expression of economic or political grievance (Eva Reichmann). Stefan Rohrbacher: *Gewalt im Biedermeier. Antijüdische Gewaltausschreitungen im Vormärz und Revolution*, Frankfurt, 1993.

¹⁰ David Blackbourn: 'Roman Catholicism, the Centre Party and Antisemitism in Imperial Germany', in: *Hostages of Modernisation. Studies on Modern Antisemitism 1870-1933/39*, ed. by Herbert A Strauss, 2 vols, Berlin, 1992-93, I, 107-128. Heinrich August Winkler: 'Antisemitism in Weimar Society', in: *ibidem*, 196-206. Uriel Tal: *Christians and Jews in Germany. Religion, Politics and Ideology in the Second Reich, 1870-1914*, London, 1975. Olaf Blaschke: *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, Göttingen, 1997. Walter Zwi Bacharach: 'Das Bild des Juden in katholischen Predigten des 19. Jahrhunderts', in: *Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Bayern*, ed. by Manfred Tremel, Josef Kirmeier, Munich, 1988.

¹¹ John Cornwall: *Hitler's Pope*, Harmondsworth, 1999, pp. 336-42.

¹² Helmut Walser Smith: *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict. Culture, Ideology, Conflicts, 1870-1914*, Princeton, 1994. Helmut Walser Smith, Chris Clark (eds): *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany 1800-1914*, Oxford, 2001. Christhard Hoffmann; Werner Bergmann; Helmut Walser Smith: *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern Germany*, Ann Arbor, 2002.

culture is set in a national context, which takes antisemitism beyond a mere Machiavellian functionalism.

Less is known about Catholics and antisemitism in Weimar Germany.¹³ There are still points of discussion on the extent of antisemitism and its supporters or opponents. This field is still very much divided between Hermann Greive's view that Catholic antisemitism was a precursor to National Socialist antisemitism, and the defensive argument by Rudolf Lill where Catholicism is seen as a bastion against antisemitism because of the Church's steadfast condemnation of racism and National Socialism. Greive supports his argument with the many ideological links between the Church and National Socialism, racist notions taken for granted and the lack of a clear stance against antisemitism. More recent studies seem to offer a way out of this polarisation. For instance, Anthony Kauder's comparison between the predominantly Catholic city of Düsseldorf with predominantly Protestant Nuremberg revealed that the use of antisemitism was not necessarily connected with Catholic dogma or economic disadvantage, but rather with a lack of liberal attitudes combined with *völkisch* nationalism within the general culture and politics of the Nuremberg region. Oded Heilbronner, too, has shown that Catholic acceptance or rejection of antisemitism and National Socialism is not dependent on Catholic faith, but rather on the general political infrastructure and culture of a region.¹⁴

For many years there had been very few comparative studies on modern antisemitism. A number of studies have offered a multi-national history of antisemitism, where one national history of anti-Jewish parties, legislation or violence is followed by another. Poliakov's three volumes on European antisemitism

¹³ On the importance of the First World War for the course of German history see, e.g., Richard Bessel: *Germany after the First World War*, Oxford, 1993. Bernd Weisbrod: 'Gewalt in der Politik. Zur politischen Kultur in Deutschland zwischen den Weltkriegen', *GWU*, 43 (1992), 391-404. On antisemitism see Donald Niewyk: 'Solving the "Jewish Problem": Continuity and Change in German Antisemitism, 1871-1945', in: *Hostages of Modernisation*, I, 352-70. Shulamit Volkov: 'Kontinuität und Diskontinuität im deutschen Antisemitismus, 1878-1945', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 33 (1985), 221-43. On antisemitism in Weimar Germany in general see Helmut Berding: *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, Frankfurt, 1988. Dirk Walter: *Antisemitische Kriminalität und Gewalt. Judenfeindschaft in der Weimarer Republik*, Bonn, 1999. Oded Heilbronner: 'From Antisemitic Peripheries to Antisemitic Centres: The Place of Antisemitism in Modern German History', *JCH*, 35 (2000), 559-576.

¹⁴ Anthony Kauders: *German Politics and the Jews. Düsseldorf and Nuremberg, 1910-1933*, Oxford, 1996. See also Catholics and antisemitism in the Black Forest in Oded Heilbronner: 'The Role of Nazi Antisemitism in the Nazi Party's Activity and Propaganda. A Regional Historiographical Study', *LBIYB*, 35 (1990), 397-439.

have become a classic for chronological and empirical comparisons. Olaf Blaschke's and Aram Mattioli's collection of essays on Catholic antisemitism work on the same level. Most of these articles tell different tales of Catholic Jew-hatred but agree that it had a distinct character in its ambiguity and defensive outlook. Such compilations have since been complemented by Herbert Strauss' multi-national *Hostages of Modernisation*. Its contributors examine European antisemitism under one overarching theoretical framework, where antisemitism is interpreted as a rebellion against modernity. This approach permits a qualitative analysis and direct comparison of Jew-hatred in the various countries. Other studies are smaller in scope, but dig deeper into a society's structure, social context and prevailing set of ideas. They allow a more direct comparison with insights into the causes of antisemitism and its meaning within a specific society. Peter Pulzer and Hermann Greive were among the first to compare political and intellectual antisemitism in Germany and Austria systematically. In the last few years, the comparative approach has been particularly fruitful in regional studies.¹⁵

Researchers agree that antisemitism in nineteenth century Germany was less hostile than Jew-hatred in France, Eastern Europe and Russia at the time. During the first three decades of the twentieth century antisemitism in Germany was still less virulent and less widespread than in Austria. However, the military defeat and the emergence of the violent physical antisemitism of the far-right had changed attitudes towards Jews considerably. The comparison with Britain has often been implicit in studies on German antisemitism, where Britain has been held up as model liberal democracy that did not tolerate antisemitism. However, this was hardly ever systematically executed.¹⁶ Antisemitism in Britain has consequently been described as 'minor key', a form of subtle social discrimination.¹⁷ A direct comparison of

¹⁵ Leon Poliakov: *Geschichte des Antisemitismus*, 8 vols, Worms, 1977-80. Olaf Blaschke, Aram Mattioli (eds): *Katholischer Antisemitismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Ursachen und Traditionen im internationalen Vergleich*, Zürich, 2000. Herbert A Strauss (ed.): *Hostages of Modernisation, 1870-1933/39*, 2 vols, Berlin, 1992-93. Peter Pulzer: *The Rise of Political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria*, rev. edn, Cambridge MA, 1988. Hermann Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie. Katholizismus und Judentum in Deutschland und Österreich 1918-1933*, Heidelberg, 1969. Albert Lichtblau: *Antisemitismus und soziale Spannungen in Berlin und Wien, 1867-1914*, Berlin, 1994.

¹⁶ On the many misconceptions surrounding the German *Sonderweg* thesis and the comparison with Britain see Geoff Eley: 'The British Model and the German Road', in Geoff Eley; David Blackbourn: *The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth Century Germany*, Oxford, 1984, pp. 18-155.

¹⁷ Herbert A Strauss: 'Great Britain – The Minor Key', in: *Hostages of Modernisation*, I, 289-293.

Jewish life in Germany and Britain was eventually undertaken in the Leo Baeck Institute volume *Two Nations*. The peculiarity of German or British antisemitism is made clear in articles on Jewish emancipation or the perception of Eastern European Jews. Werner Mosse comes to the conclusion that British society was more porous and eventually more tolerant.¹⁸

Research on Catholics in England and antisemitism in the modern period has so far not attracted general attention. Single facets of Catholic antisemitism are well documented, such as the popularity of the British Union of Fascist amongst Catholics and their tendency to support Franco's nationalists in the Spanish Civil War. The antisemitism of *The Witness* publications by Hilaire Belloc and Cecil and Gilbert Keith Chesterton, or of the Catholic press in general is usually mentioned in survey histories on antisemitism in Britain.¹⁹ An effort to look at the Catholic community in general in order to set these examples into a Catholic and national context has only recently been undertaken.²⁰

The importance of the lost war and economic crisis to the rise of National Socialism has been increasingly accepted and research on antisemitism in the interwar period is growing as are the numbers of comparative studies. However, Catholic attitudes towards Jews before the Second World War remain under-researched. This thesis fills this particular gap and offers an account of popular antisemitism outside the fascist far-right organisations.

Like the work of Helmut Walser Smith and Oded Heilbrunner, this thesis is intended to put Catholicism and antisemitism in a social context. This means that Catholic

¹⁸ Brenner, et al (eds): *Two Nations*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁹ Tony Kushner: *The Persistence of Prejudice. Antisemitism in British Society During the Second World War*, Manchester, 1989, p. 79, p. 81. Colin Holmes: *Antisemitism in British Society 1876-1939*, London, 1979, p. 204. Geoffrey Field: 'Antisemitism with the Boots off', in: *Hostages of Modernisation*, I, 294-325, (p. 298). For further general works on antisemitism in Britain see David Feldman: *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, New Haven, 1994. Richard Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted: Captain Ramsay, the Right Club and English Antisemitism, 1939-40*, London, 1998. Susanne Terwey: 'Kabale und Intrige zum Fin de Siècle. Deutsche Juden in britischen Phobien', *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, 26 (1997), 479-493.

²⁰ Good examples so far are Kester Aspden: *Fortress Church. The English Roman Catholic Bishops and Politics, 1903-1963*, Leominster, 2002. Adrian Hastings: *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990*, London, 1991. Dennis Sewell: *Catholics. Britain's Largest Minority*, London, 2001. Thanks go to Richard Overy who kindly gave me a copy of Sewell's book.

discourse on the 'Jewish question' is linked more closely to Catholic social and political life at the time. Furthermore, the thesis takes a broader look at Catholic society and is not restricted to political Catholicism in Germany or Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton in England. This allows a better assessment on how influential these voices were in their community and to what extent they represented a 'Catholic' view of the 'Jewish question'.

1.2 The Method

A comparison is always about similarities and differences. Even though historians might primarily take note of the particularities of their objects, they eventually still seek to relate these details to broader historical questions. Contrasting one national history with another leads to a deeper knowledge of their place in history. More interestingly though, comparisons cast light on historical contexts as they often open up further questions of the origin, course and characteristic of historical events.²¹

Although the thesis contrasts the nature and extent of Catholic antisemitism in Germany with that in England, the main emphasis of this work is on a general development of antisemitism in two different societies. The thesis thus documents Catholic discourse on the 'Jewish question' and when, where and through whom antisemitism emerged in German and English Catholic communities. The aim is to determine how antisemitism informed individuals' actions or passivity by linking the learned discourse on the 'Jewish question' in Catholic publications to the societal context, in other words to events and individuals.

Tony Kushner doubts the usefulness of comparing antisemitism in Germany and England, as Jew-hatred in Britain would always come out as the 'lesser key' in this context. Rather than casting light on the nature and development of antisemitism in Britain, such a comparison tends to gloss over its severity and distinctiveness.²² Kushner's scepticism is justified. The outcome of comparisons that investigate

²¹ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Jürgen Kocka: 'Historischer Vergleich: Methoden, Aufgaben, Probleme. Eine Einleitung', in: *Geschichte und Vergleich. Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. by H.-G. Haupt, J. Kocka, Frankfurt, 1996, pp. 11-15. John Breuilly: 'Introduction: Making Comparisons in History', in: J. Breuilly: *Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe. Essays in Comparative History*, Manchester, 1992, pp. 1-25.

²² Kushner: 'Comparing Antisemitism', pp. 91-109.

different nations and societies is often already defined through the selection of objects and research question. Both need to be chosen carefully.²³ Comparisons more than other historical methods (re)construct reality through their deliberate choice of objects, their interconnectivity and the analysis. In order to avoid arbitrariness a comparison needs clear definitions and an awareness of possible differences in linguistic usage and terminology.²⁴ The point is not to construct a national character but to uncover structures and traditions in a society that deter or promote antisemitism. At the same time, the individual and his/her responsibility and actions must not be forgotten over social structures. A preference for one over the other has fuelled old historical debates, but the two can be reconciled. Carlo Ginzburg, for example, suggests that reconstructions of contacts and confrontations between individuals can expose the 'networks of social relations into which the individual is inserted'.²⁵ Individuals are not just passive objects in a social structure, but act within their society and therefore shape their environment. In this sense social structures are essentially manmade.

The Anglo-German comparison can be credible, if first, it goes beyond the search for racial antisemitism to include the broader society and not just the radical fringe. Second, similar objects should be compared. For instance, a comparison between the antisemitism of Hilaire Belloc and the racist antisemitic writer Artur Dinter would distort the picture in favour of England.

Catholics, the chosen subject for this thesis, invite comparability on a basic level – their faith. Of course, differences existed. The most striking is the percentage of Catholics in both countries. Whereas one third of the population in Weimar Germany was Catholic (21,172,087 Catholics in 1933, or 32,5%), Catholics in England and Wales accounted for less than 5% of the population (2,244,580 Catholics in 1932).²⁶

²³ Haupt; Kocka: 'Historischer Vergleich', p. 16.

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 24-25.

²⁵ Chris Clark: 'Jewish Conversion in Context: A Case Study from Nineteenth Century Prussia', *German History*, 14 (1996), 281-96, (p. 284).

²⁶ For the German statistics see Heinz Hürten: *Deutsche Katholiken 1918 bis 1945*, Paderborn, 1992, p. 559. The numbers for England and Wales are estimates, because census in Britain did not longer ask for the citizens' denomination. The estimates were derived from the number of Catholics attending mass, Catholic marriages and baptisms, and Irish immigration, and were published in the *Catholic Directory* (in this case of 1933, pp. 579-80). John Hickey finds the *Directory's* estimates rather conservative and suggests a Catholic population of over 5 million in 1951. John Hickey: *Urban Catholics. Urban Catholicism in England and Wales from 1829 to the Present Day*, London, 1967, p. 12.

Secondly, there was a difference in the ethnic and social make-up of Catholics in England and Germany. Growing immigration from Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century, meant that the Irish community in England soon represented the largest ethnic group among Catholics. The majority of Catholics in England belonged to the working and lower middle class, in contrast to Germany, where Catholics were overwhelmingly farmers, craftsmen or small businessmen. The social background of the Catholic leadership was likewise markedly different. The most influential bishops in Germany belonged either to the nobility or the upper middle class, while their brethren in England came largely from a middle-class background.²⁷ This does not mean that English Catholicism was more egalitarian. Adrian Hastings, for instance, remarked that the hierarchy had very little contact with the 'ordinary' Catholic because of the strong class divide. That the bishops largely acted through the Catholic gentry on the political stage underlines this division further.²⁸

In the course of the analysis, it becomes clear that Catholics in Germany could rely on an old, well-established social and political infrastructure in their professional and private life. This infrastructure in England was still growing and imperfect. These differences, however, do not impede the comparison. The common creed and rites, together with similar moral standards and the consciousness of belonging to a religious minority, are all factors which shaped a specific Catholic view of life. Part of this view was antisemitism. The difference in intensity of these prejudices may then be explained in parts by distinct political, social and economic pre-conditions.

Considering the small numbers of Catholics, would it not be more 'meaningful' to compare the Protestant majority's attitude towards Jews? The preference for Catholics over Protestants in this context has several advantages. On a very simple level, the rather broad comparison of two societies became much more manageable because of the small size of the Catholic community, especially in England. Despite

²⁷ Cardinal Bourne was for instance the son of a post office clerk in Clapham. For illustrating biographical details of the English/Welsh hierarchy see, e.g., on Bourne's background: Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 21. For the German bishops see Erwin Gatz (ed.): *Die Bischöfe der deutschsprachigen Länder, 1785/1803-1945. Ein biographisches Lexikon*, Berlin, 2001.

²⁸ Adrian Hastings: 'English Catholicism in the Late 1930s', in A. Hastings: *The Shaping of Prophecy*, London, 1995, pp. 69-83, (p. 70). Thomas Moloney: *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican. The Role of Cardinal Hinsley, 1935-1943*, Tunbridge Wells, 1985, pp. 26-27.

renewed interest in Catholic antisemitism, the theme has not been investigated to the same extent as Protestant antisemitism and Protestant sympathy for National Socialism. Further, the Catholic community in the two countries was more homogenous and therefore easier to compare. Anglicans in Britain share very little with Lutheran Protestants in Germany, without mentioning the sheer variety of Protestant churches in both countries. The minority status of Catholics in itself adds an interesting aspect to the comparison. Given that Catholics and Jews both faced a Protestant majority, would this situation give rise to sympathy between the two? The Centre Party's principle of religious tolerance, for instance, was based on the awareness that any call to restrict the Jewish minority's freedom could provoke discrimination against the Catholic minority too. The question of a group's minority status has recently gained renewed interest in studies and investigations into the formation of national identities. How did Catholics fit into or react to nations that predominantly defined their identity through Anglicanism or Protestant Prussia, and what role did antisemitism play in this conflict?²⁹ This problem is briefly touched upon in the section on the Catholic conservative right.

Finally, limiting the study to the Catholic community has a methodological advantage. Differences in antisemitic attitudes are usually explained by a subject's different religious, national or social background. Within this comparative framework, the religious factor is cancelled out, since Catholics in Germany and England shared the same faith. The focus can then be on the role of the national and social environment in determining anti-Jewish attitudes.

Two conceptual frameworks suit the investigation into Catholic antisemitism particularly well. The first is built on the assumption that Jews were increasingly identified with the 'ills' of the modern world. They stood for excessive capitalism, socialism, modern art and immorality. Modern antisemitism was (is) consequently a rejection of modernity.³⁰ From the time of the Vatican's *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) onwards, the Catholic Church made clear its ambivalent embrace of the modern world. The explanation of antisemitism as a form of anti-modernism works best

²⁹ Smith; Clark (eds): *Protestants, Catholics and Jews*, Oxford, 2001. Smith: *German Nationalism*, Princeton, 1994. Peter Alter (ed.): *Die Konstruktion der Nation gegen die Juden*, Munich, 1999.

³⁰ This theoretical framework was the basis for the comparative essays in Herbert Strauss (ed.): *Hostages of Modernisation*, 2 vols, Berlin, 1993.

when applied to a conservative or nationalist worldview, but is less convincing in a moderate or left-wing context. Here, Jews might still be identified with the above-mentioned phenomena, but anti-Jewish sentiment was not necessarily motivated by a rejection of modernity. Catholicism for instance was not per se reactionary. Social Catholicism had worked for reforms to alleviate the worst social consequences of modern capitalism. It was less a rejection of modernity than an adjustment of its pace to social circumstances.

The second framework, Shulamit Volkov's concept of antisemitism as a 'cultural code', has also been largely applied to a conservative worldview. It can however be used as an excellent platform from which to explore the role and character of modern antisemitism further. Volkov's reading states that antisemitism was a 'fitting element in a complex and many sided culture', one 'aspect of [an] inclusive worldview', that apart from antisemitism also included extreme nationalism, opposition to democracy, and the hope for a rebirth of a harmonious, unified nation and Christian morals.³¹ In Volkov's interpretation, antisemitism is no longer the driving element of the 'German Ideology' that depends on a Hegelian or Fichtian spiritual diet and ends in genocide.³² It is one part of a political outlook that is determined by a person's place in society, occupation and general political conviction.³³ The concept of a 'cultural code' has recently been criticised by Oded Heilbrunner who stressed that there were many different 'codes' in Imperial Germany, many overlapping. In these 'codes', according to Heilbrunner, Catholics and women were often more discriminated against than Jews. The 'cultural code' remains, however, a viable interpretative framework as long as researchers are not blind towards chronological change and social and geographical differences within a society.³⁴

Volkov has developed her concept largely for nineteenth century antisemitism. She stresses that the parameters need to be adjusted if transferred into the interwar

³¹ Shulamit Volkov: 'Antisemitism as Cultural Code', *LBIYB*, 23 (1978), 25-45, (p. 34), as cited in Peter Pulzer: *German Antisemitism Revisited*, Rome, 1999.

³² George Mosse: *The Crisis of German Ideology. The Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, London, 1966.

³³ Shulamit Volkov: *The Rise of Popular Antimodernism in Germany. The Urban Master Artisans, 1873-96*, Princeton, 1978. Shulamit Volkov: 'The Written Matter and the Spoken Word. On the Gap between pre-1914 and Nazi Antisemitism', in: *Unanswered Questions. Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews*, ed. by Francois Furet, New York, 1989, pp. 33-53.

³⁴ Heilbrunner: 'Antisemitic Peripheries', pp. 561-63.

period. I would suggest two adjustments. Firstly, the ‘cultural code’ should not be restricted to the nationalist conservative worldview. Antisemitism was still strongest therein, but was also very pronounced outside this milieu. Secondly, the nature of antisemitism changed depending on which ‘culture’ adopted anti-Jewish stereotypes into its repertoire. A good example are the various smaller Catholic parties to the left and right of the German Centre Party which were considerably more antisemitic in their publications and statements than the Centre itself. While they usually employed a similar *völkisch* rhetoric, their Jew-hatred took different forms. The target of the Catholic right (Christian National People’s Party) was the Jew as a liberal, socialist or Bolshevik, who allegedly undermined Christian morals, and was responsible for the degeneration of the German *Volk*. The Christian Social Reich Party, left of the Centre Party, focused instead – true to its left-wing political interest – on the Jews as capitalists.³⁵ Antisemitism had turned into an empty vessel that could be filled with various differing anti-Jewish stereotypes depending on the author’s general cultural or political framework. With the ‘cultural code’ Volkov has successfully combined social history with history of ideas and offered a suitable tool to interpret interwar antisemitism.

1.2.1 Geography

The dissertation only looks at Catholicism in England, and not in Ireland, Scotland, or Wales. As in Scotland, Catholics in Wales were a very small minority of two to three per cent of the population, many of them Irish immigrants or their descendants. The Welsh case raises problems, since the Catholic hierarchy was at least formally that of ‘England and Wales’. However, the most important archive, the diocesan archive of Cardiff, is not open to researchers. Since the greater part of this study is based on church sources, a lack of such material in the case of Wales would have created an imbalance. The reason for Scotland’s absence is justified more easily. In the 1707 Act of Union, Scotland was granted independence in the sphere of law, education and the Church. Once Catholics were to gain a hierarchy it would be a

³⁵ Letter ‘Das Neue Volk’ (Vitus Heller, Würzburg) to Archbishop Klein in Freiburg, 31.8.1928; and article: ‘Kardinal und Arbeiter. Zur Beachtung für katholische Arbeiter’, *Volksfreund*, 26.7.1929. Both in Erzbischöfliches Archiv Freiburg (EAF), B2-29/29.

national one, independent of the English and Welsh hierarchy. It was created in 1878, twenty-eight years after the restoration of the English hierarchy. Including Scotland might as well justify the inclusion of Switzerland on the German side of the comparison. A further point can be raised out of methodological concern. Religion in Wales and more so in Scotland (often riddled with sectarianism) tended to be an expression of national consciousness.³⁶ In the context of the formation of national identities this is indeed quite interesting and should be pursued further. It is, however, not directly relevant to this research question, as the Catholic hierarchy was not keen to express another national identity than 'Englishness'.

Ireland achieved its independence from Great Britain in 1922 and, as in Scotland, Catholics were consequently cared for by a separate national, i.e., Irish hierarchy. The methodological concerns are deeper in this case. Ireland, unlike Germany and England, is predominantly Catholic. Moreover, Catholicity is an integral part of Irish national identity and nationalism and compares in this respect probably more easily with Poland.³⁷ Yet this study is a comparison between Catholic minorities in a majority Protestant state, whose national character is defined by Protestantism.

Irish Catholics in England are a trickier issue. Mass immigration of mainly unskilled Irish workers in the nineteenth century had helped to swell the number of Catholics to an extent the Church would not have achieved through conversions alone. Their presence has shaped the English Catholic Church and cannot therefore be easily ignored. Sheridan Gilley finds that Catholicism in England at that time was defined by two cultures. One was an aristocratic, convert and literary culture, and the other was an Irish proletarian culture. However, the number of Irish-born in England had peaked in 1861 (602,000) and immigration fell considerably after that, so that Gilley observes for the 1920s: 'As the loyalty to Ireland faded, it was Catholicism that provided the social cement for a flourishing communal life.'³⁸ Recent literature on Irish ethnicity in context with racism and the formation of national identity, stresses that the Catholic Church in England and the British state were keen to denationalise

³⁶ Keith Robbins: 'Religion and Community in Scotland and Wales since 1800', in: *A History of Religion in Britain. Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present*, ed. by Sheridan Gilley, Oxford, 1994, pp. 363-80, (p. 364).

³⁷ Sheridan Gilley: 'Catholicism in Ireland', in: *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750-2000*, ed. by Hugh McLeod, Werner Ustorf, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 99-112.

³⁸ Sheridan Gilley: 'The Roman Catholic Church in England, 1780-1940', in: *A History of Religion*, pp. 346-62, (pp. 356-61).

the Irish. The Church achieved this through a specific mission to the Irish and Catholic schooling (separate from English Catholics) to turn them into loyal, law-abiding British citizens. What was left after the process of denationalisation was Catholicism. Mary Hickman convincingly argues that by the twentieth century the 'Irishness' was not lost but contained and rendered invisible, displayed only when socially appropriate.³⁹ Both Hickman and Fielding suggest that 'Irishness' had integrated into the broader culture of Catholic England without losing its 'private' identity and in the interwar period we are dealing more with second generation Irish who had grown up in a Catholic English environment. For this reason, the thesis has no specific chapter on Irish Catholics, though I comment on an Irish background where possible and appropriate.

In the case of Germany, the geographical scope of the thesis is limited to a few regions. Catholicism was mainly a phenomenon of the east (Silesia), south (Bavaria, Baden) and west (Rhineland, Westphalia) of the Republic. The majority of German Catholics, 14 million, lived in Prussia under a distinctively Protestant government and civil service (78,2% were Protestant in 1910). The thesis cites primarily examples from Bavaria as the most Catholic of the German Länder (70,6% Catholics in 1910) and as the 'cradle' of National Socialism. Westphalia and the Rhineland (69% Catholic) are also key examples.⁴⁰ Both districts were part of Prussia and examples – unlike Bavaria – where the Catholic milieu (cohesion measured in Church attendance, Centre Party / BVP votes, membership in Catholic lay organisation, ultramontanism) was strongest.⁴¹ Yet while the Rhineland was characterised by its working and lower middle-class background, Westphalia was a heartland of the Catholic gentry (together with Silesia and Bavaria). Some examples are also taken from diaspora communities, i.e., Catholics living in a largely Protestant environment, including the capital Berlin. Only 10% of Berliners were Catholics in a young diocese (only established after the Prussian concordat was ratified in 1929). These choices were made to distinguish between Catholics as a

³⁹ Mary Hickman: *Religion, Class and Identity. The State, The Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain*, Aldershot, 1995, pp. 98-100, pp. 251-52. Steven Fielding: *Class and Ethnicity. Irish Catholics in England 1880-1939*, Buckingham, 1993, pp. 47-55.

⁴⁰ Hürten: *Deutsche Katholiken*, pp. 13-17.

⁴¹ Arbeitskreis für kirchliche Zeitgeschichte Münster: 'Katholiken zwischen Tradition und Moderne: Das katholische Milieu als Forschungsaufgabe', *Westfälische Zeitschrift*, 43 (1993), 588-654, (pp. 364-72).

majority and those living in a largely Protestant state, between Catholics from different social backgrounds, and between regions of diverging cultures (e.g., urban Berlin, rural Westphalia).

1.2.2 Sources

The thesis is based on a combination of primary sources including contemporary Catholic publications on the 'Jewish question' and archival documents of Catholic religious and secular life in Germany and England. The former include selected Catholic newspapers, journals and Catholic publications aimed at political education. The archival material is taken from diocesan archives, federal and state archives, and private archives. I have also looked into non-Catholic sources in England for Jewish and Protestant responses to Catholic antisemitism and the communities' later co-operation against National Socialism and the persecution of the Jews. These include records of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Council for Christian and Jews, and Lambeth Palace Library.⁴²

The Catholic print media was a public forum for editors and readers to discuss the 'Jewish question' amongst other topics of the time. For historians these texts have become a useful means to describe the nature and virulence of antisemitism in the media at a given time. They also reveal the kind and amount of information available to readers. Unlike academic journals, newspapers come closer to the 'ordinary reader' because of their higher circulation and affordable price. It is, however, difficult to read these discourses as a direct reflection of popular opinion in general. There remains a visible, if occasionally transparent, curtain between the two. How the readership received and reacted to this discourse is often a matter of speculation and more information from other sections of the Catholic communities is needed to come as close as possible to the elusive popular opinion of the 'ordinary Catholic'.

⁴² There have been numerous publications on the German equivalents, the *Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus* and the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*. See the latest account including an overview of the already existing literature by Avraham Barkai: 'Wehr Dich!' *Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, 1893-1938*, Munich, 2002. Arnold Paucker: *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik*, Hamburg, 1968.

The archival material supplements the print media with examples on how the 'Jewish question' was debated in Catholic religious and secular life. The sources are chosen for their ability to depict and distribute this debate. They are, for example, pamphlets, election campaigns, and publications of Catholic lay organisations and parties. The German federal and state archives' collection of these party publications have been a useful means to see how the 'Jewish question' and the big ideologies of the day were presented to the electorate. Police reports and news of local administrations on the activities of extreme right and left-wing organisations also comment on public responses to these groups. These give an indication of how the information provided 'from the top' was received by the population. Private letters addressed to the bishops are rare examples where opinions of 'ordinary Catholics' found a direct outlet. Of the numerous Catholic lay organisations in both countries, I have primarily focused on those who professed political, social or educational interests, as they were more likely to engage in and disseminate a discourse on the 'Jewish question', or respond to communism or fascism. In Germany's case these include the publisher and political educator *Volksverein*, as the largest lay organisation and co-ordinator of the celebrated annual display of Catholicism at the *Katholikentage*. In England's case, I have used sources of the educational society Catholic Social Guild and the publisher Catholic Truth Society. Both count among the larger and more prominent lay organisations.

While these sources are taken from a Catholic secular world, the diocesan archives provide ample material on the religious sphere. Pastoral letters, sermons, prayer books, and sources on religious education bear the traces of the Church's traditional religious anti-Judaism. The records of the Catholic Guild of Israel, an English Catholic mission to the Jews, turned out to be a rich source on precisely this issue. To my knowledge, they have so far not been used in previous research. In this same context, I have taken a closer look at the records of the Joseph Teusch Werk in Cologne that defended the Church against the regime's anti-Catholic campaigns after 1935. Teusch's publications have been cited by historians as an example of Catholic pro-Jewish sentiments, because they acknowledge and praise Christianity's roots in Judaism. These sources allow an assessment of the extent to which modern, secular antisemitism had found its way into the religious world.

The chosen sources are not simply canvasses for Catholic anti-Jewish opinions, they also reveal information on Catholic reactions to antisemitism, National Socialism and fascism. The loudest expression of a dislike of Jewry and parliamentary democracy came from the Catholic conservative right in both communities. The records and publications of the *Rechtskatholiken* and the core Distributists around G.K. Chesterton describe their antisemitism on one hand and on the other hand their links to mainstream or established Catholicism, including the bishops, the media or influential lay organisations. The material drawn from diocesan, state and private archives is likewise able to reconstruct established Catholicism's response and relation to the Catholic right.

The thesis is by no means exhaustive in its portrait of Catholic antisemitism in the interwar years. The selection of the material was at times determined by the suitability and availability of sources. The simplest restriction was set by the geographical and methodological considerations outlined earlier. Physical destruction and limited access to some material posed a bigger problem. Wartime destruction and fires destroyed quite a number of diocesan records of Weimar Germany, as for instance those of Münster or Munich and Freising (although the documents of their bishops, von Galen and Faulhaber, survived and have been subsequently published). Other archives simply housed no relevant material for the interwar period. The Leeds diocesan archive is such an example. Although access to Catholic archives and their files was generally fairly unrestricted, I occasionally encountered closed doors. Some are generally not open to researchers, such as the Cardiff diocesan archive, and the archive of both the German and English bishops' conferences. I have likewise received negative responses from the Catholic Union of Britain to my enquiry for access to their documents. Others were just difficult to work with. I was, for instance, not allowed to use the archive's catalogue in the diocesan archive of Passau, and was thus only able to look at the few files the archivist was willing to release.

In every comparison a sensible balance of comparable material for each side is desirable in order to come to meaningful conclusions. The thesis is to a large extent based on German and English sources from similar institutional backgrounds, such as the Catholic media, records of the hierarchy and the most prolific Catholic

educational publishers, as well as the organisations of the Catholic conservative right. At times, the selection of primary sources does not seem as even as comparative theory might demand, because Catholicism's infrastructure developed at different times, and at a different pace and with a different emphasis in both countries. The amount and quality of sources consequently varies. For instance, while Catholic occupational associations have a long tradition in Germany, many similar societies were only set up in the 1920s and 1930s in England. Still, the Catholic anti-Jewish discourse is like a red thread running through the thesis. The fact that it was picked up by different institutions or social groups in one community is an essential part of any comparison where the contrasts are as important as the similarities.

1.2.3 *Definitions*

By the 1920s, public Jew-baiting had become less acceptable, even amongst antisemites. While it was less present in mainstream politics, antipathy or even discrimination against Jews was still part of British and German social life.⁴³ For instance, the Liberty Restoration League's honourable aim was to 'defend the Natural and Constitutional Rights of the Citizen'. But amongst themselves they agreed that the best method would be to rely 'on the good offices of Members and Peers ... for the propagation of its policy, and it is in Private Member Bills that the spearhead of its attack on Jewry may be looked for.'⁴⁴ As a result, researchers are often confronted with ambiguous statements on Jews or with a coded language.⁴⁵ Positivist research methods alone are consequently a blunt tool in this investigation as single public speeches or publications would rarely reveal antisemitism. To decode the language, historians need to be familiar with the discourse at the time, and ideally with the attitudes of the author and his/her audience.

The mere definition of antisemitism can be the first pitfall, as it often pre-determines the outcome of a study. This has been particularly obvious in literature on

⁴³ Kushner: *Persistence of Prejudice*, p. 79.

⁴⁴ Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 59.

⁴⁵ For coded languages see Ruth Wodak: 'Suppression of the Nazi Past, Coded Languages, and Discourse of Silence,' unpublished conference paper given at the German Historical Institute London, 27 March 2004. Thanks go to Mark Fenemore who alerted me to this paper.

Catholicism and antisemitism, where fierce controversies rest to a large extent on a restrictive definition of Jew-hatred in terms of racial antisemitism.

I have found Helen Fein's recent definition of antisemitism a useful one and have adopted it as a general description of Jew-hatred for my study: Antisemitism is, according to Fein,

a persisting latent structure of hostile beliefs toward Jews as a collectivity, which is designed to distance, displace or destroy Jews as Jews and/or carries (some of) these consequences.⁴⁶

With respect to my research objects (Catholics), I believe however that such a general definition of antisemitism needs further qualification. A distinction between traditional religious anti-Judaism and modern, secular antisemitism (which can include socio-cultural, economic and racist stereotypes) remains quite essential in this context in order to detect the links between the religious and the modern, secular forms of Jew-hatred, which have been denied in the Vatican's *We Remember* and other Catholic publications.

Antisemitism is usually defined as hatred of Jews as Jews, but contains in fact many different layers of prejudice. The most notorious element has been racial antisemitism because of its direct responsibility for the Holocaust. In most societies, racial antisemitism was, however, outweighed by other – older – components of Jew-hatred. Religious prejudices were the most continuous factors in this melange, often used to justify secular antipathies against Jews. This was followed by an equally old and traditional prejudice: economic antisemitism. At times it grew out of real economic rivalry, but this accounts only for individual cases. The crisis of capitalism in the interwar years spiralled this traditional stereotype into the bogey of the malevolent Jewish financier or profiteer and hardly resembled the realities of Jewish life. The last component of modern Jew-hatred was cultural antisemitism. In itself this was composed of a wide range of sentiments, such as cultural pessimism, anti-alienism and anti-communism. It was motivated largely by fears for the integrity of the national identity and the survival of a nation's Christian values. Among all these

⁴⁶ On the problem of defining antisemitism see Kushner: *Persistence of Prejudice*, pp. 2-7. Helen Fein: 'Dimensions of Antisemitism: Attitudes, Collective Accusations, and Actions', in: *The Persisting Question*, pp. 67-86, (p. 69).

stereotypes the Jewish Bolshevik was the most powerful at the time, because it was perceived to be the uttermost danger to the integrity of the Christian nation. Against this background it is the phantom of a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy in particular that helps to reveal the deeper responsibilities for the rise of National Socialism.

Thus, racial antisemitism is not the main focus of this thesis. Such an emphasis has often been misleading if not self-serving in many studies on Catholics and antisemitism, as this tunnel vision tended to exempt Catholics from any responsibility for National Socialism and the Holocaust on the basis that the Church had always condemned racial idolatry. There is a widely accepted conclusion that the Catholic concept of race was still very blurred and usually referred to Jews as a cultural people distinct from Britons or Germans, without a biological determinism. However, this does not mean that this definition of Jewry was less exclusive. Racial antisemitism cannot be excluded from an investigation into interwar antisemitism, but the use of 'race' and its biological determinants is discussed as part of the general Catholic discourse on the 'Jewish question'. Instead of singling out one specific form of Jew-hatred, it is useful to know how racism was incorporated into more traditional forms of Jew-hatred, especially in a study on the interwar years. The emphasis here is more on how existing antisemitism accommodated National Socialist or fascist antisemitism and the rise of political fascism.⁴⁷

I have restricted the term 'Catholic' to those individuals and organisations who practised their faith or to those in whose worldview Catholicism played a substantial part.⁴⁸ Traditionally, literature on Catholicism focused solely on a 'Catholic milieu' meaning the Catholic parties and their associations in Germany, or the bishops and

⁴⁷ Research usually emphasises that racial antisemitism was not central to the NSDAP's election campaigns, but rather cultural antisemitism. Dana Arieli-Horowitz: 'The Jews as "Destroyer of Culture" in National Socialist Ideology', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 32 (1998), 51-67. Angelika Müller: 'Der jüdische Kapitalist als Drahtzieher und Hintermann. Zur anisemitischen Bildpolemik in den NS Wahlplakaten der Weimarer Republik, 1924-33', *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, 7 (1998), 175-207. Jürgen Matthäus: 'Antisemitic Symbolism in Early Nazi Germany, 1933-35', *LBIYB*, 45 (2000), 183-203. For Hitler's voters see Richard Hamilton: *Who voted for Hitler?*, Princeton, 1982; Thomas Childers: *The Nazi Voter. The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany 1919-1933*, Chapel Hill, 1983; Jürgen Falter: *Hitlers Wähler*, Munich, 1991. Looking at generations in Germany's body politic rather than exclusively at the social background see Richard Bessel: 'The Formation and Dissolution of a German National Electorate from the Kaiserreich to the Third Reich', in: *Elections, Mass Politics and Social Change in Modern Germany*, ed. by Larry Jones; James Retallack, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 399-418.

⁴⁸ This excludes many high-ranking Nazis such as Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler or Rudolf Höss as they had reputedly turned their backs on the Church and Catholicism as such.

the Catholic aristocracy in England. This study goes beyond the realm of political Catholicism and the hierarchy and includes the *Rechtskatholiken* (Catholics who joined the DNVP or sympathised with the German nationalists) and the Distributists around Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton, as well as the larger educational institutions (*Volksverein, Zentralkomitee der Katholiken Deutschlands*, the Catholic Truth Society) and Catholic missions. This broader definition of Catholicism is useful because neither the Centre Party in Germany nor the bishops in England uniformly represented Catholicism in both countries. The 'milieu' has become more fragmented in Germany, and the popularity of Belloc and Chesterton had a more profound influence on a Catholic culture in England than a reclusive hierarchy and aristocracy.

1.3 Catholicism in Germany and England

English and German Catholicism hardly had a thriving cultural or intellectual exchange. Apart from personal contacts between individual bishops, the two communities took little notice of each other.⁴⁹ The English clergy had a closer relationship with French and Belgian Catholicism, where English Catholics had found refuge in times of persecution. Nevertheless, the model of continental political Catholicism with the emphasis on lay participation in numerous Catholic organisations did inspire the Catholic Social Guild in its own work, while Bishop Casartelli of Salford thought the continental model would offer a barrier against socialism in his diocese.⁵⁰

As members of one Church, Catholics in both countries shared the same hierarchical structure, faith and rites. The centralisation and unification of the Catholic world church developed consistently from the dogma of papal infallibility and reached a zenith in the publication of the *Codex Juris Canonici* in 1917. Similar to the modern civil law book, this book of law included a complete codification of existing Catholic canon law and was applied throughout the entire Church. The Church became one great legal entity, where all offices and rites have their own well-defined

⁴⁹ The Catholic Social Guild also invited Heinrich Brüning to its summer conference in 1933. Letter O'Hea to Bishop Williams, 2.3.1933. Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives (BAA), AP / S8 / 1.

⁵⁰ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 32.

place and are secured by a specific jurisdiction. At the head of this Church stood the pope with all-encompassing supremacy.⁵¹ In contrast, the authority of the local church was significantly weakened, not least because the right to appoint bishops was now reserved to the pope. The Code clearly aimed at further centralisation of power in the papacy, and at the standardisation and legalisation of the Church.⁵² The hierarchical organisation of the Church in Germany and England was consequently largely identical in the timeframe of this thesis. The bishops have the command over their dioceses and are only responsible to the pope. They delegate pastoral and administrative duties to their priests who represent and organise the Church on the ground without retaining any constitutional rights. The Archbishop of Westminster and the Cardinal Archbishop of Breslau (at the time) presided over the national conferences of the bishops, but had no authority over other bishops.⁵³

The historical experience of the Church in Germany and England was, however, different and left its mark on the otherwise identical structure. The Catholic Church in the German Länder had experienced the secularisation of Church property in 1803, the reorganisation of German Länder under Napoleon and later Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* in the 1870s that disrupted the ecclesiastic structure temporarily. Apart from these disturbances, the Church rested on a strong and well-established hierarchy that remained loyal to Rome (especially during and after the *Kulturkampf*). The Catholic hierarchy in England, however, ceased to exist under Elizabeth I, when in 1559 the majority of the bishops refused to disavow the primacy of the pope. The ecclesiastical structure, from the parish to the bishoprics, was no longer Catholic. From then on until 1908, England was regarded and administered by Rome as missionary territory. The four Vicariates established by Rome in place of the hierarchy can only nominally be regarded as a hierarchical structure, as the Vicars Apostolic had no authority on the ground. The missionary clergy were members of religious orders and only answerable to their own superiors. Even the secular clergy had their own organisation that was largely independent from the bishops. Only after the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850 did the bishops gain the upper hand and bring the clergy under their control. Parishes were created even later in 1918. At that time,

⁵¹ Klaus Scholder: *The Churches and the Third Reich. Preliminary History and the Time of Illusions 1918-1934*, 2 vols, London 1987-88, I, 52-53.

⁵² Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 3.

⁵³ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 10-13. Hürten: *Deutsche Katholiken*, pp. 35-40.

almost seventy years after the restoration, the Catholic Church in England was still being built, new dioceses were created and others were split.⁵⁴ Compared to the hierarchy in Germany, the English ecclesiastical structure was young, still growing but far less rooted in the community in 1918. The pastoral care and coverage improved however considerably over time. There were, for instance, in 1901 3,298 priests looking after around 1,500,000 Catholics. This number increased by 1940 to 5,652 priests who cared for approximately 2,500,000 people, or one priest for a congregation of 440.⁵⁵ In Germany, one priest looked after the spiritual care of almost three times as many faithful, 1,027 (1925). In the same year, the English and Welsh hierarchy had as many archbishoprics as Germany and only four suffragan sees fewer.⁵⁶

As one consequence of the fairly recent re-establishment of the Catholic Church in England, Catholicism's political weight and social organisation differed immensely from that in Germany. Martin Conway speaks of a social Catholicism in England and a political Catholicism in Germany.⁵⁷ Catholics in Germany were politically represented by two parties: the Centre Party and the Bavarian People's Party. They could also rely on a vast and dense network of Catholic organisations, catering for every age and profession. In England and Wales on the other hand, the organisational infrastructure was still in its infancy by the 1920s, seventy years after the re-establishment of the hierarchy. Most of the organisations were devotional and

⁵⁴ By 1924, one arrived at a completed structure of four archbishoprics and fourteen suffragan sees. The archdiocese of Westminster included the following suffragan sees: Northampton, Brentwood, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Southwark. The archdiocese of Liverpool included the suffragans Lancaster, Hexham and Newcastle, Leeds, Middlesbrough, and Salford. Birmingham administered the suffragans Clifton, Plymouth and Shrewsbury. Finally, there was the archdiocese of Cardiff with its suffragan Menevia. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 10. Morgan Sweeney: 'Diocesan Organisation and Administration', in: *The English Catholics 1850-1950*, ed. by George Beck, London, 1950, pp. 116-50. Gilley: 'The Roman Catholic Church in England', pp. 346-62.

⁵⁵ For numbers of priests see Gilley: 'The Roman Catholic Church in England', p. 356. For the size of the Catholic population see Hickey: *Urban Catholics*, p. 12.

⁵⁶ The result derives from the number of Catholics in the Reich (with the Saar) in 1925 (20,785,293) and the number of clergy (20,226). Hürten: *Deutsche Katholiken*, pp. 560-62.

⁵⁷ Tom Buchanan, Martin Conway: *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*, Oxford, 1996, p. 249. Edward Norman stressed another particularity of English Catholicism. He found that the leadership of the English Catholic Church remained profoundly patriotic despite the ultramontanist of English Catholicism. Edward Norman: *Roman Catholicism in England from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council*, Oxford, 1985, p. 116, as cited in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 7. On Norman see also page 36 of this thesis. On the social and political history of Catholicism (and its milieu) in Germany see Christoph Kösters; Antonius Liedhegener: 'Historische Milieus als Forschungsaufgabe. Zwischenbilanz und Perspektiven', *Westfälische Forschungen*, 48 (1998), 1-12. For Britain see Hastings: *A History of English Christianity 1920-1985*, London, 1986. Hickey: *Urban Catholics*, London, 1967. John Bossy: *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850*, London, 1979.

parochial in character rather than political, and only a handful gained national importance.⁵⁸ Professional organisations took off very slowly and there was no organisation by and for Catholic workers until 1935. Although there were two attempts to start a Catholic party, such a political presentation was never feasible considering the small numbers of Catholics, the British election system and anti-Catholic attitudes.⁵⁹

In contrast to Germany, where the Catholic social milieu was welded to the Centre Party during the Bismarckian *Kulturkampf*, the Catholic community in England was quite diverse in its political tastes. While Catholic workers (largely from an Irish background) tended to vote for the Liberal Party and later for Labour, the hierarchy, clergy and the old influential Catholic families relied on the Conservatives to safeguard denominational schooling. Because of these political divisions, any direct political activity by the clergy often had contradictory or negative effects.⁶⁰ Considering these handicaps there remained two avenues for promoting Catholic interests in British national politics. First, there was the direct and personal way through Catholic membership of the two houses of parliament. A favourite negotiator for the hierarchy was for many years Lord Fitzalan and his Catholic

⁵⁸ According to Hugh McLeod, the Catholic community in Britain developed a proliferation of parish-based organisations, loosely linked to a wider chain, whereas Catholic organisations in Continental Europe were centralised national federations. Hugh McLeod: 'Building the "Catholic Ghetto": Catholic Organisations 1870-1914', in: *Voluntary Religion*, ed. by William J. Sheils, Diana Wood, Studies in Church History, 23 (1986), pp. 411-44, (pp. 416-17).

⁵⁹ The first attempt was started by Thomas Burns, secretary of the Catholic Trade Union and the Salford Catholic Federation in Salford in September 1918. The Catholic Centre Party was anti-socialist and anti-Labour and ultimately not very successful. It folded soon after its failure in the municipal elections in Manchester 1919. The second trial was undertaken by Bishop Keating in Liverpool in 1927. His Catholic Representation Association (CRA) replaced the Irish Nationalist Party. Though more a pressure group than a party, the CRA did initially quite well in local elections. It promised to stand in for the Church's educational interest, social betterment of the working classes and the improvement of housing. In the long run, the CRA provoked the public's resentment of Church interference in politics. Keating's successor, Archbishop Downey, disbanded the CRA (it continued as Centre Party and eventually folded in the 1930s) and encouraged Catholics to participate in civic life in general. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 136, pp. 161-64. On the problem of a Catholic party in England see Hastings: *English Christianity*, p. 32, p. 165. Buchanan; Conway: *Political Catholicism*, pp. 250-53.

⁶⁰ For example, in municipal elections in 1906, and a by-election in 1908 the Bishop of Leeds, William Gordon, urged his Catholics to vote against the Liberal candidates. Yet the Catholic vote in Yorkshire (mostly Irish) remained solidly Liberal. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 28-29. On politics and Catholics in general see also Dermot Quinn: *Patronage and Piety. The Politics of English Roman Catholicism, 1850-1900*, London, 1993. Josef L. Altholz: 'The Political Behaviour of the English Catholics, 1850-1867', *Journal of British Studies*, 4 (1964), 89-103. Philip J. Waller: *Democracy and Sectarianism: a Political and Social History of Liverpool 1868-1939*, Liverpool, 1981. Peter Doyle: 'Religion, Politics and the Catholic Working Class', *New Blackfriars*, 54 (1972), 218-25.

Union of Great Britain.⁶¹ Their main campaigning issue was the removal of remaining restrictions on the Catholic community. Drawn from the landed gentry and upper middle class and overwhelmingly Tory in its political orientation, the Union had little interest in workers' rights and was unremittingly anti-socialist.⁶² The second approach was to use the existing Catholic lay organisations as lobbying tools. The method was very effective when issues close to the Catholic heart were at stake, such as funding for Catholic schools or birth control.⁶³ Yet lobbying was generally counter-productive whenever the clergy or lay organisations tried to influence the Catholic vote directly. Catholics in the northern industrial dioceses, for instance, were particularly steadfast in their support for the Liberal and Labour Party, despite the clergy's recommendation of the Conservatives. Their obstinacy is understandable considering that 'ordinary' Catholics' interests were hardly represented by the Catholic Union nor by the hierarchy. Following these experiences, the bishops decided not to interfere with the laity's political activities, as this would divide the community more than unite it.⁶⁴

First signs of a disintegration of the German Catholic milieu were visible shortly before the First World War and became more apparent during the Weimar period.⁶⁵ Although politically very successful (the Centre participated in every government), the milieu was gradually losing its cohesion, partly through increasing secularisation. This trend was compounded by internal conflicts (between its reformist left and conservative right wing) and the Centre's fading legitimacy in the eyes of Catholic voters towards the end of the 1920s. Its electoral base was gradually dwindling from 13.6% in 1920 to 11.2% in 1933, when only 40% of all Catholics (outside Bavaria) voted for the Centre. Detlev Peukert suggests that the Centre – like the liberal parties – was tainted precisely by its constant participation in Weimar governments.⁶⁶ However, the Catholic milieu had shown cracks even before the First World War,

⁶¹ Catholic non-political lay organisation formed by the 15th Duke of Norfolk in 1871 to watch over Catholic interests in governmental action, proposed legislation or the activities of local authorities. Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 115.

⁶² Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 49.

⁶³ On Catholic lay organisations and British politics see RH Butterworth: 'The Structure and Organisation of Some Catholic Lay Organisations in Australia and Great Britain. A Comparative Study', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1959.

⁶⁴ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁵ On the cohesion and decline of the Catholic milieu in Weimar Germany see Oded Heilbrunner: *Die Achillesferse des deutschen Katholizismus*, Tel Aviv, 1998.

⁶⁶ Detlev Peukert: *Die Weimarer Republik*, Frankfurt, 1987, p. 158.

when Catholic workers began to vote for the SPD in the 1912 general election. The factors that had bound Catholics together, such as antagonism towards the Protestant state, latent discrimination and the feeling of inferiority, declined in importance in the Weimar Republic. Adam Stegerwald, a centre-right Centre politician and leader of the Christian Trade Union, felt in 1918 that the Centre Party would no longer be able to accommodate the manifold political currents among Catholics, whether liberal, right-wing or reactionary.⁶⁷ Indeed, the political field was no longer left to the Centre alone. The Bavarian Catholics seceded from the Centre Party in 1919 to form the Bavarian People's Party (BVP).⁶⁸ Adam Stegerwald's Christian-National People's Party tried to attract the support of Catholic intellectuals and nationally minded workers, but was never really successful. Further alternatives to the Centre were offered by the DNVP's National Catholic Council founded in 1920, or by the Christian Social Reich Party of Vitus Heller, which was the left-wing equivalent to Stegerwald and the *Rechtskatholiken*.⁶⁹ The Centre certainly remained the strongest Catholic political force. Apart from the BVP none of these small parties was successful at the ballot, and since the Centre and the BVP agreed to co-operate, the Centre did not need to fear Bavarian competition. Nevertheless, as Oded Heilbronner asserts, these developments speak of an eagerness to leave the self-prescribed 'ghetto' and participate in general national political movements.⁷⁰

Because of a lack of Catholic parties, English Catholicism has often been favourably compared to continental (especially Belgian and German) Catholicism as being an 'open' instead of a 'closed' system, which meant that Catholics were encouraged to play a constructive part in liberal democratic politics alongside non-Catholics.⁷¹ Edward Norman praised the 'English values' of the bishops – fair play, tolerance, freedom – that softened the harsher ultramontane ideals of the hierarchy. These

⁶⁷ Letter Stegerwald to Hans Becker, 22.11.1918. Bundesarchiv Berlin (BA), R8115I / 180 Zentrum.

⁶⁸ In its handbook *Die politischen Strömungen unter Katholiken* the Centre listed four Catholic parties and three political Catholic groups, but insisted that the majority of Catholics would still support the Centre and the Republic. Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BAK), ZSG 1 108/10 Deutsche Zentrumspartei. Einzelveröffentlichungen 1926-32.

⁶⁹ Born in Würzburg, formerly a farmer, became secretary of the *Volksverein* in 1911 where he had already published the newspaper *Das Neue Volk*. 'Bericht über die christlich-soziale Reichspartei, 3 November 1926', EAF, B2-29/29.

⁷⁰ Heilbronner: *Die Achillesferse*, pp. 223-25.

⁷¹ See, e.g., John H. Whyte: *Catholics in Western Democracies*, Dublin, 1981, pp. 7-8. Jeffrey von Arx: 'Catholics and Politics', in: *From Without the Flaminian Gate*, ed. by Vincent Alan McClelland, Michael Hodgetts, London 1999, pp. 245-71.

idealised images of English Catholicism have been criticised by Mary Hickman who has pointed out that there existed different conceptions of what English Catholicism was because of the community's social and ethnic differences. The Irish in England, for instance, responded more favourably to the clergy's ultramontanism, not just because of the 'ultramontane mission to the poor', but also 'championing [of] and fidelity to Roman authority was more acceptable to the Irish than aristocratic English Catholicism'.⁷²

German historiography supported the image of a 'closed' Catholicism in Germany, though recent work has offered nuances to this traditional monolithic portrait of German Catholicism. However, the view of a fairly hermetic ultramontane subculture persists.⁷³ Aram Mattioli and Olaf Blaschke see the 'closed' Catholic milieu, based on a strong ultramontanism as the environment where antisemitism was a common part of Catholic culture.⁷⁴ The idea of an 'open' and 'closed' Catholicism is less useful for the period from 1918 to 1939. With the absence of persecution and options to engage with a wider German society, the Catholic bond gradually but notably lost its importance. Kester Aspden, too, has modified the open / closed model when he asserts that the politics of the English Catholic community should be understood 'as a product of the tensions between conflicting sets of demands, some drawing the Church away from, some pushing it towards the wider society' rather than as the result of specific national or religious characteristics.⁷⁵

In this sense, knowledge of the organisational structure of Catholicism in both countries remains important to this thesis. This is the background against which the discourse on the 'Jewish question' evolved, and the framework in which Catholic organisations and individuals acted. For instance, the lack of a well-organised network of social and political lay organisations in England allowed the eloquent and

⁷² Hickman: *Religion*, p. 102.

⁷³ Most research used Rainer Lepsius' work as a starting point. He has divided German society into four mostly antagonistic social milieus: a conservative, bourgeois/liberal, socialist and a Catholic milieu. Rainer Lepsius: 'Parteiensysteme und Sozialstruktur: Zum Problem der Demokratisierung der deutschen Gesellschaft', in: R. Lepsius: *Demokratie in Deutschland. Soziologisch-historische Konstellationsanalysen. Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, Göttingen, 1993, pp. 25-51. Arbeitskreis für kirchliche Zeitgeschichte Münster: 'Katholiken zwischen Tradition und Moderne', pp. 588-654. Most research focuses on the *Kaiserreich*, e.g., Thomas Nipperdey: *Religion im Umbruch. Deutschland 1870-1918*, Munich, 1988. Olaf Blaschke, Frank-Michael Kuhlmann (eds): *Religion im Kaiserreich: Milieus – Mentalitäten – Krisen*. Gütersloh, 1996.

⁷⁴ Olaf Blaschke: 'Die Anatomie des katholischen Antisemitismus. Eine Einladung zum internationalen Vergleich', in: *Katholischer Antisemitismus*, pp. 3-54.

⁷⁵ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 7.

widely publicised Distributists and their antisemitism considerable space. In the case of Germany, the in-fighting of the Centre Party and the concern about the disintegration of the Catholic milieu paralysed an effective struggle against the antisemitism of the Catholic right and against National Socialism.

While the lay organisations in both countries differed in their organisational form, the national hierarchies and Catholic intellectuals shared two ideas. These were anti-socialism and the tendency to retreat into spirituality, both of which were also advocated by the Vatican.⁷⁶ The consequences were significant. For once, the cultivation of a 'red scare' and the rhetoric of a rebirth of the spiritual community and rejection of materialism resembled the discourse of the extreme right. On some occasions this shared worldview became a bridge-builder between conservative Catholics and the extreme right. Secondly, the hierarchies' disengagement from social and political questions weakened the moderate lay organisations and allowed a convergence on the right.

1.4 The Structure

While the second chapter is purely discursive, the chapters that follow describe the reflections of this discourse in society. Texts alone often offer only a limited idea of the depth of antisemitism within a society and can at best suggest why Jew-hatred erupts and when. However, many events in the interwar years provoked anti-Jewish responses among Catholics: the revolutionary end of the war or financial scandals in Germany; Palestine and the Spanish Civil War in England. At the same time the rise of fascism and National Socialism gave Catholics the opportunity to respond to the anti-democratic and antisemitic waves that these movements created in their wake. The remaining chapters link text with events, which expose a more profound idea of how widespread antisemitic attitudes were within the two Catholic communities.

In contrast to Chapter Two, Chapter Three does not recreate a *written* antisemitic discourse, but shows examples where antisemitism had adopted more *active* forms,

⁷⁶ For Germany see Heinz Hürten: *Kleine Geschichte des deutschen Katholizismus 1800-1960*, Mainz, 1986, pp. 199-208. For England see Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 146-195.

as for example in party programmes, in Catholic political education or in private and public statements of renowned Catholic personalities. Chapter Three is devoted to the Catholic conservative right as one specific group that was particularly vociferous in their antisemitism, but also includes an overview of Catholic attitudes to Jews and antisemitism in the wider community. In England, the Catholic conservative right is represented by the core Distributists around G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, in Germany by the *Rechtskatholiken*, Catholics who were members of or sympathised with the DNVP. Studies on fascism and National Socialism have often remarked on the affinities between the extreme nationalist right and conservatism and underlined the conservative right's role in the convergence on the right in the 1930s.⁷⁷ In this context, the Catholic conservative right in both communities is interesting for various reasons, apart from their strong antisemitism. Firstly, they often managed to revive an antisemitic discourse that was receding in political Catholicism after 1924. Secondly, they can also be seen as bridge-builders between the extreme right and conservatism not just because of their anti-democratic and antisemitic views, but more profoundly because of their contacts and sympathies with fascist and *völkisch* groups respectively. At the same time, these groups retained their esteem and influence in mainstream conservative society. Thirdly, the Catholic conservative right is not seen isolated from mainstream Catholicism (hierarchy, parties, lay organisations). It is interesting to see how the wider Catholic community reacted to fascism and *völkisch* nationalism in general, and to the anti-democratic and antisemitic views of the core Distributists and the *Rechtskatholiken* in particular. In the end, the 'bulwark Catholicism' against the extreme right looked quite porous, and that against antisemitism was almost non-existent.

The fourth chapter examines Catholic reactions to the persecution of the Jews after 1933, and puts Catholicism's tolerance for the Jews and its rejection of racial antisemitism to the test. The chapter looks at the Church's argument with Rosenberg's anti-clerical ideology during the Church Struggle in Germany. The argument was pitched on a religious base (the defence of the Old Testament and the Jewish roots of Christianity) and could have been the ideal occasion to live up to the Church's long-standing tolerance for the Jews. The defence against Rosenberg tests

⁷⁷ A classic is Martin Blinkhorn (ed.): *Fascists and Conservatives. The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth-Century Europe*, London, 1990.

the clear distinction between a religious anti-Judaism and a modern sociological, political antisemitism suggested by *We Remember*. English Catholics' scope for tolerance was tested with the arrival of 'non-Aryan' Catholic refugees from Germany and Austria and the need to set up Catholic aid organisations.

Anti-Jewish sentiments tend to be studied in a national setting or with an emphasis on the religious dimension, namely the tradition of Christian Jew-hatred. These studies have produced very valuable results in the way they described and explained the nature and rise of antisemitism in one society. Without this knowledge, a comparison in the form of a doctoral thesis would have been unmanageable. It draws out the similarities and differences in Catholic attitudes towards Jews in Germany and England, and addresses the reasons for these differences. National studies will naturally focus on specific national characteristics that determine the use of antisemitism, while inquiries into antisemitism's religious roots tend to emphasise the universal nature of Christian anti-Judaism and its continuity. In this comparison, however, these specific factors are just two among many others that shaped antisemitic prejudices. The comparative approach puts both the idea of national peculiarities and of universal experience into perspective.

2 The 'Jewish Question' in Catholic Publications

The 'Jewish question' had been discussed in Germany since Christian Konrad Wilhelm von Dohm's essay *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* in 1781. After a lull in overtly antisemitic sentiments since the beginning of the twentieth century, the 'Jewish question' was pushed back into the limelight during the war (from 1916) and persisted until the early 1920s, sustained by a widespread red scare and the publication of the so-called Protocols of Zion. After the electoral successes of the NSDAP in 1929 and 1931, the early 1930s saw a resurgence of a public discourse on the 'Jewish question' beyond the *völkisch* circles that had kept the debate alive since 1924. The *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* published a special issue on the 'Jewish question' in 1930.¹ Essay collections appeared in the bookshops in 1932 encompassing opinions of the conservative right, the NSDAP, KPD, and well-known writers and academics.² Reinhard Rürup saw in this long-drawn out discussion about Jewish emancipation – especially compared with England and France – one of the key factors in a peculiarly German antisemitism.³

A specific Catholic antisemitism and Catholic discourse on the 'Jewish question' has received more attention since the 1970s. Analysing the petitions of Bavarian

¹ *Süddeutsche Monatshefte*, September 1930. With contributions by Ismar Elbogen, Israel Cohen, Gerhard Holdheim, Leo Baeck, Eva Reichmann-Jungmann, Max Naumann, Josef Hofmiller, Carl Maria Kaufmann, Ernst Möring, Ernst Jünger, Graf Ernst Reventlow, Theodor Fritsch, Kurt Kornicker, Theodor Seibert.

² See, e.g., *Der Jud ist schuld ...? Ein Diskussionsbuch*, ed. by Zinnenverlag, Basel / Berlin, 1932 which also brought together a range of writers from a pro-Jewish to anti-Jewish attitude. The chapter that argued for discrimination against Jews included contributions by well-known members of the NSDAP and the conservative right, e.g., Graf Reventlow, Gottfried Feder, Artur Dinter, and Wilhelm Stapel. In a separate chapter, the economist Werner Sombart, and the Catholic priest Hermann Joseph Wehrle among others rejected discrimination but confirmed the notion of an 'unhealthy' Jewish influence in German society. The book also included a pro-Jewish chapter, where authors such as Heinrich Mann, Max Brod, Theodor Lessing, Lion Feuchtwanger, Max Naumann, stressed the positive influence of Jews on German society. Similar: *Klärung. 12 Autoren, Politiker über die Judenfrage*, ed. by Verlag Tradition Wilhelm Kolk, Berlin, 1932.

³ For the discussions on Jewish emancipation during the Enlightenment see Berding: *Moderner Antisemitismus*, pp. 20-42. Reinhard Rürup: 'Jewish Emancipation in Britain and Germany', in: *Two Nations*, pp. 49-63. Rainer Liedtke, Stefan Wendehorst (eds): *The Emancipation of Catholics, Jews and Protestants. Minorities and the Nation State in Nineteenth Century Europe*, Manchester, 1999. Rohrbacher: *Gewalt im Biedermeier*, Frankfurt, 1993. On the 'Jewish question' in European history see Axel Bein: *The Jewish Question. Biography of a World Problem*, Rutherford, 1990. Rena Auerbach: *The 'Jewish Question' in German Speaking Countries, 1848-1914. A Bibliography*, New York, 1994.

Catholics against Jewish emancipation in the 1840s, James Harris recently argued that this anti-emancipation campaign had already borne the characteristics of modern mass politics with its political use of antisemitic sentiments well before the advent of the Protestant antisemitic parties in the 1870s and 1880s.⁴ Olaf Blaschke closely analysed Catholic antisemitism and saw a specific 'twofold' form of Jew-hatred in the ambivalent attitude of Catholics towards Jews.

In one of these 1932 essay collections, Hermann Wehrle articulated an explicitly Catholic attitude to the 'Jewish question' which can certainly be seen as a classic example of Blaschke's Catholic 'twofold antisemitism'. Wehrle honoured the religious Jews' spirituality and their devotion to family and tradition, values, he felt, they shared with Catholics. He also refuted the accusation that Jews were disloyal to any nation but their own and expressed Catholic solidarity with Jews, since they had met similar prejudice since the advent of the nation-state. Even though Wehrle agreed that 'irreligious' Jews were to some extent responsible for liberalism's excesses, he cautioned against condemning all Jews:

It should, however, not be denied that there are Jews who in their obtrusiveness are getting on decent people's nerves. Yet these are [...] often those Jews who care precious little about their [...] religion. [...] One has to distinguish between Jews as 'symbioses' and 'parasites'. Today's raging hatred against Jews only seems to refer to the latter. Looking at it from a rational viewpoint it has to be limited to those. Even then it should not turn into a hatred that ignores the Christian boundaries of love, but an alertness that protects one's *Volksgenossen* against exploitation and fraud. [...] purification [*Säuberungsaktion*] from within Jewry would be very necessary, for the Jews' sake.⁵

In England, a 'Jewish question' was hotly debated after the Boer War and when the Aliens Act was drafted in 1905, intensifying during the Marconi scandal in 1911. Antisemitism in Britain could well be part of an ideology and was at times less pragmatic than Werner Mosse claims it to be.⁶ Hostility towards Jews was not just an aberration of the anti-Bolshevik mania in the early 1920s and fascist agitation in the 1930s, but was rather continuous among some Catholics.

⁴ Harris: *The People Speak!* Ann Arbor, 1994.

⁵ Dr Hermann Josef Wehrle: 'Die Stellung des gläubigen Katholiken zur Judenfrage', in: *Der Jude ist Schuld ...?*, p. 265.

⁶ Werner Mosse: 'Introduction', in: *Two Nations*, pp. 1-15.

Historians have not yet offered a specific account of Catholic antisemitism in England. So far, Hilaire Belloc and the Chesterton brothers, Gilbert Keith and Cecil, have been cited as the main representatives of Catholic antisemitism in England, to some extent deservedly. Belloc and the Chestertons were at the centre of Catholic intellectual life, and were passionately engaged in this debate at the time. They had promised to disclose the 'Jewish danger' threatening England, in many of their publications.⁷ They were not alone in British literary circles. Anti-Jewish attitudes among British writers were fairly common at the time. Brian Cheyette has found that in the post-liberal age (1870-1940s) many well-known British writers had created an ambivalent image of 'the Jew', where 'the Jew' could be salvation and apocalypse at the same time. This 'semitic discourse' in British literature sought and fought for cultural values, but was at the same time often underpinned by a racial definition of 'the Jew'. Cheyette believed that the 'semitic discourses' of the writers he discussed (including amongst others Matthew Arnold, TS Eliot, James Joyce, George Bernard Shaw, Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton) resembled the antisemitism prevalent in Europe at the time.⁸

The following pages will, however, not refer to antisemitism in high literature or popular books. This discourse of the 'Jewish question' is generally well documented – Richie Robertson and Brian Cheyette have written profound analyses on antisemitism in British literature, and little can be added to their work (especially not from a Catholic perspective, as the few well known Catholic writers were covered in their work).⁹ Instead, the focus of this chapter will be on the 'Jewish question' as it was discussed in Catholic newspapers. It would be illusionary to hope to capture the mind of 'ordinary' Catholics through these. However, newspapers with their easy accessibility to a wider readership (cheap, high circulation media, available on street corners), bring the historian a step closer to the ordinary reader than an analysis of contemporary (academic) journals that were largely read by the learned middle class.

⁷ See, e.g., Cecil Chesterton: *The Party System*, London, 1911; Cecil Chesterton: *The Perils of Peace*, London, 1916.

⁸ Bryan Cheyette: *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society. Racial Representations 1875-1945*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 9, pp. 273-74.

⁹ On antisemitism within German literature see Richie Robertson: *The 'Jewish Question' in German Literature 1749-1939. Emancipation and its Discontents*, Oxford, 1999. On Catholic writers: Kevin Morris: 'Fascism and British Catholic Writers, 1924-39. Part I', *The New Blackfriars*, 80 (1999), 32-45. Kevin Morris: 'Fascism and British Catholic Writers, 1924-39. Part II', *The New Blackfriars*, 80 (1999), 82-95.

They reveal change over time and the instrumentality of antisemitism. The purpose here is to set the scene for the following chapters with an overview of how the 'Jewish question' and its 'solution' were defined, as well as the antisemitic stereotypes prevalent in the publications of both Catholic communities. Attention is given to the differences in frequency and nature of antisemitic stereotypes. In order to reach beyond a description of antisemitism, note is also taken of when anti-Jewish prejudices were activated and by whom. The Catholic discourse is linked to events at the time and the general dispute about a 'Jewish question' to avoid the creation of further exceptionalisms. What follows identifies Catholic images of Jewry as they were presented in Catholic publications.

The use of newspapers as a means to reconstruct antisemitism in public discourse has its methodological problems. Not least is the question of what to count and how. How many negative mentions of the word 'Jew' make up an antisemitic article? Does one antisemitic sentence turn a half-page article into an anti-Jewish attack? Anthony Kauders in his book *German Politics and the Jews* rightly puts context before numbers, preferring qualitative analysis over bald quantitative statistics.¹⁰ The following sections adopt Kauders' method and focus on the context and content of the discourse on the 'Jewish question' in selected Catholic newspapers.

A graver problem is gauging how representative certain newspapers were of public opinion. Circulation numbers are not always reliable and little information on the editors and journalists survives.¹¹ This problem is almost insurmountable in the context of a dictatorship. With the National Socialist co-ordination of opposition newspapers and especially following the Amann laws in 1935 it becomes too complex for the purposes of this thesis to assess the editors' scope for free decisions.¹² The chronological comparison is for this reason distorted, as the analysis

¹⁰ Kauders: *German Politics*, pp. 4-5.

¹¹ Olaf Blaschke convincingly argued the clergy's influential rule in disseminating antisemitism in the countryside during the *Kaiserreich*. Olaf Blaschke: 'Die Kolonialisierung der Laienwelt. Priester als Milieumanager und die Kanäle klerikaler Kuratel', in: *Religion im Kaiserreich*, pp. 93-135. This control was certainly considerably looser during the Weimar period, as more lay people than clergy ran the numerous Catholic lay organisations (though the clergy retained their positions on the boards of these organisations) and the Catholic 'milieu' was beginning to break up. On the difficulty of crossing the border between the 'learned' and the 'popular' discourse see Helmut Walser Smith: 'The Learned and the Popular Discourse of Antisemitism in the Catholic Milieu of the Kaiserreich', *CEH*, 27 (1994), 315-28, (pp. 327-28).

¹² Catholic newspapers were not simply abolished or transformed into church newsbulletins. Many Centre papers continued to publish news and comments up to 1939 and beyond (e.g., *Germania*,

of German Catholic newspapers ends in January 1933 and not in 1939 as in the English case. After the Catholic Church had given up political Catholicism in the Concordat in July 1933, any public statement or action gradually fell back on the bishops. The religious sphere had won over the political. The Church's action or passivity regarding Jewish persecution is thus better judged by the behaviour of its leadership and not on the increasingly 'empty' pages of Catholic papers. This sphere is looked into in the last chapter of the thesis.

The reasons for continuing the analysis of English Catholic newspapers up to 1939 are simple: first, to see how the events in Germany were discussed in England; second, to probe the dimensions of the 'silence' of the Catholic Church on antisemitic issues.

2.1 England

Up to the beginning of the twentieth century Catholic media usually fulfilled one main task. They were primarily designed to supplement a national media which either ignored Catholic news, or stood for principles that ran contrary to the Church's mission and claim. The need for Catholic media was felt even more strongly in Britain, where Catholics felt themselves exposed to an anti-Catholic climate. This was a particular ambition of Hilaire Belloc and Cecil and G.K. Chesterton with their *Witness* publications. By 1918 Catholics in England had four main weekly newspapers at their disposal: *The Catholic Times and Catholic Opinion*, *The Catholic Herald*, *The Universe*, and *The Tablet*. From 1935 Catholics also read a newly launched paper, the *Catholic Worker*. In addition to these newspapers two religious orders, the Benedictines and the Jesuits, published *The Blackfriars* and *The Month* respectively. Both journals were devoted to theology, literary criticism and current affairs.

Ausburger Postzeitung), some adopted a pro-government line (e.g., *Der Feuerreiter*), most dailies restricted themselves to news reports rather than comments. Walter Hannot: *Die Judenfrage in der katholischen Tagespresse Deutschlands und Österreichs 1923-1933*, Mainz, 1990, p. 129. Otto Roegele: 'Presse und Publizistik des deutschen Katholizismus 1803-1963', in: *Der soziale und politische Katholizismus. Entwicklungslinien in Deutschland 1803-1963*, ed. by Anton Rauscher, 2 vols, Munich, 1981-82, II, 395-434, (pp. 424-26).

The *Catholic Times*, subtitled *The Organ of the Catholic Body*, was established in 1876 by Mgr. Nugent and was first edited by John Denvir.¹³ Initially, it was mainly read in Liverpool and northern England, but gradually found its readers in London too. In 1920 The Newspaper Press Directory described the *Catholic Times* as an independent journal whose 'home and foreign news services are the best, while the ablest literary talent, at home and abroad, is secured to make the *Catholic Times* a good general and family paper'.¹⁴ Its political outlook was conservative. Fr William Barry succeeded Mgr. Nugent as the paper's owner and PL Beazley edited the *Catholic Times* for the next twenty-seven years. After the First World War the paper's circulation began to decline and it was eventually bought by Fr Herbert Vaughan and became the organ of the Catholic Missionary Society. From 1933 to 1937 it was edited by Dr. Bernard Grimley and was the only Catholic weekly with a priest as editor. Willing's Press Guide of 1935 estimated the paper's circulation at 37,000 copies per issue.¹⁵

The *Catholic Herald* was founded by Charles Diamond in 1884. Diamond was an outspoken Labour politician devoted to social reform whose invectives even landed him into prison. Before the publication of the *Catholic Worker*, the *Herald* was the only Catholic left-wing (yet still anti-socialist) newspaper. The paper soon gained a large readership, particularly among the larger Catholic population in industrial centres. With Diamond's death in 1934, the *Catholic Herald* was acquired by a group of laymen who were keen to modernise the well-known paper. It was turned into a 'journal of opinion', reporting on world news from a Catholic view rather than remaining a paper on specifically Catholic news. The proprietors saw therein an opportunity to influence non-Catholics who were curious about Catholicism. From April 1936, under the editorship of Count Michael de la Bédoyère, the *Catholic Herald* was said to have around 100,000 readers every week and became 'an established Catholic force'.¹⁶

¹³ The following information on the history of *The Catholic Times*, its owners and editors are taken from Beck: *English Catholics*, pp. 508-509.

¹⁴ *The Newspaper Press Directory and Advertising Guild*, London, 1920.

¹⁵ *Willing's Press Guide and Advertiser's Directory and Handbook*, London, 1935.

¹⁶ Andrew Sharf claims that the *Catholic Herald* was out of tune with the opinion of the British Catholic community. Cited in Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 137. This might be true for the tastes of the bishops who were indeed often exasperated by the *Catholic Herald*. Yet its considerable readership

The *Catholic Worker* was first published in 1935. Its chief editor was Robert Patrick Walsh, a dedicated supporter of workers and trade unions. The monthly paper found its readership in the industrial cities of northern England and London. Within a year its net sales amounted to 19,000 copies and in 1937 it almost equalled the strength of the *Catholic Times* with 32,000 copies per edition. In its political editorship the paper condemned both socialism and fascism. A 'just wage', humane working conditions and a remedy for unrestrained capitalism were the *Catholic Worker's* main issues.¹⁷

The concern for social justice was shared by the journalistic enterprises of Hilaire Belloc, Cecil and Gilbert Keith Chesterton: *The Eye Witness*, *The New Witness* and *G.K.'s Weekly*. These differed considerably from mainstream Catholic newspapers. Firstly, these publications were particular platforms for the political views of Hilaire Belloc and the Chestertons. Secondly, the antisemitism featured on their pages was more hostile in its quality. It had racial undercurrents and promoted a segregation of the Jews as solution to the 'Jewish problem' – a problem that was (for the *Witness* group) epitomised by the imaginary international Jewish financier or communist. However, besides comments on current affairs, the *Witness* publications also entertained with literary criticism, theological debates and short stories or poems by renowned Catholic writers such as Maurice Baring. This intellectual appeal as well as the support granted by members of the hierarchy and Catholic lay organisations turned the *Witness* publications into an important part of Catholic cultural life.¹⁸ Archbishop Downey of Liverpool contributed various articles on religious questions, while Thomas Burns, union activist and a leading figure in the Catholic Federation, recommended the papers on numerous occasions to members of the Federation.

and the support it found from Catholic intellectuals suggests that the newspaper found an echo in the community that should not be neglected, especially not in a chapter on Catholic public discourse. For the history and readership of the *Catholic Times* and the *Catholic Herald* see Beck: *English Catholics*, pp. 508-509. Both the *Catholic Times* and the *Herald* published local editions in Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and other cities. They contained the same news as the London edition, but reported local events in a special column. Besides these local editions of the main newspapers there were also smaller local Catholic newspapers. They concentrated on the local news and parish events, often oblivious of world news.

¹⁷ *Catholic Worker*, June 1935, p. 2.

¹⁸ The circulation of most *Witness* publications was quite low (*G.K.'s Weekly's* stood at around 8,000 copies) and reflects the fringe status with which it is associated today, rather than the papers' popularity among the educated Catholic middle class.

G.K.'s Weekly was widely advertised as the mouthpiece of the Distributist movement. *The Month* applauded it as 'a valuable literary propaganda of the Catholic tradition' and was hoping it would spread G.K. Chesterton's views further.¹⁹

The antisemitism especially of Belloc's and Chesterton's *Witness* publications has not gone unmentioned in books on British antisemitism. But because they deal with the wider national framework, the Catholic context and the comparison with other papers of the Catholic community have been neglected. Without this context it, however, is more difficult to pin down the precise sources of Catholic antisemitism. *The Catholic Herald*, the *Catholic Times*, the *Catholic Worker*, *The Month* and the publications of the Catholic Guild of Israel (CGI), a Catholic mission to the Jews, form the basis for the following analysis. The first two were chosen due to their influence and their large readership. *The Month* was picked out for its respectability and authority on cultural and theological themes among educated Catholic religious and lay people. Together with the work of the CGI, it illustrates how secular antisemitic prejudices found their place in a largely religious context. The middle class papers *The Universe*, *The Tablet*, *G.K.'s Weekly* and the Benedictine journal, *The Blackfriars*, were consulted for specific key years to avoid distorting the analysis.²⁰

2.1.1 *The 'Jewish Question' and its 'Solution'*

Among the Catholic newspapers and periodicals in England there was one weekly that not only refrained from publishing antisemitic articles but also stood up against the antisemitic slander prevalent in the late 1930s. The *Catholic Worker* did not acknowledge the existence of a 'Jewish question'. Its articles maintained that Jews were not different to other British citizens and that allegations of a Jewish conspiracy or their strong hostility towards Christianity were nonsense. Although contributions to the *Catholic Worker* shared the theological definition of the Jews as a 'witness-

¹⁹ *The Month*, September 1923, p. 314. Ibidem, February 1925, p. 175.

²⁰ These key years are 1919, 1923, 1933 and 1938 in which the *Catholic Times* and *Catholic Herald* published numerous antisemitic articles. All of these newspapers were weeklies, apart from *The Month* and *The Blackfriars* which appeared once a month.

people', that would ultimately convert to Christianity to prove Christian theology right, they strongly rejected the claim of the Jews' anti-Christian attitude. With this dismissal the *Catholic Worker* stood out from all other Catholic publications.²¹

As the *Catholic Worker* did not see the existence of a 'Jewish question' there was no need to offer a 'solution', but only to emphasise the equality of Jews. In a Catholic conception of a state, according to the *Catholic Worker*, any minority had a right to 'develop their own culture, and the State has the duty to enable them to do so'. And with particular reference to the Jews it continued:

There is a Catholic programme for the Jews. Then if a Jew breaks the law treat him as a law-breaker. But do not presume that a Jew must break the law. [...] Strict laws regulating trade would safeguard this without the extreme measure of prohibiting immigration as Mosley suggests.²²

Apart from the *Catholic Worker*, the discourse in all other Catholic newspapers examined was indeed aware of a 'Jewish question' and used the known, contemporary and modern arguments of this debate. Although the religious background remained important in this discourse, particularly the antagonism between Christians and Jews, newspaper articles also reflected the popular discussion on race characteristics and Jewish influence in British society. Two articles published in the *Catholic Herald* in 1919 reflect such a populist view on the 'Jewish question' that was reiterated in many other Catholic newspapers. Written by the editor of the *Catholic Herald*, Charles Diamond, the articles were responses to the *Morning Post* and the *Manchester Guardian* that had blamed Catholic antisemitism for the pogrom in Vilna in 1919. Diamond perpetuated therein the populist image of the immoral and unbelieving Jew, the usurer and swindler, the alien, and the revolutionary antichrist, basically the Jews as the epitome of any human vice:

They are gamblers, fond of vulgar display; cruel and domineering when they have power, sycophants and cringers when they are weak or have an end to serve; their men with hardly any sense of morality; lustful and materialistic; their women with a high reputation for chastity.²³

²¹ 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews', *Catholic Worker*, November 1938, p. 4. Although it had refuted the allegation that Jews were the natural opponents of Christians, its articles were steeped in the pious wish that the Jews would eventually find their way to the 'true' faith and convert to Catholicism.

²² All quotes taken from 'Catholic Worker and Fascism', *Catholic Worker*, February 1938, p. 7.

²³ This and the following quotes are all taken from Charles Diamond: 'The Jew and World Ferment', *Catholic Herald*, 14.6.1919, p. 6.



Like most other Catholic news publications, Charles Diamond did not deny the existence of a 'Jewish question'. Another well-respected Catholic weekly, *The Universe*, for instance, defined it as a question of 'who is to govern and who is to be governed'.²⁴ Like most commentators, Diamond saw the roots of the 'Jewish question' in Jewish antagonism towards Christianity, dating back to the biblical days of the 'Scribes and Pharisees [who] committed the paramount crime of all time' – the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. According to Diamond, the crime was followed by the 'punishment of the race', namely dispersal and persecution.²⁵ But the 'Jewish question' was not simply a theological problem in such articles. It had a very modern and secular face. Modern developments, such as communism, revolutions and modern capitalism, were regarded as symptoms of this enmity. In Diamond's view the 'internationalism' of the Jews and their 'clannishness' turned the 'problem' eventually into a 'world question':

For it is no national question. It is the question of a nation without a country, of a religion and a people anti-Christian in a fierce degree, spread among Christians everywhere, and belonging to another and a different civilisation.²⁶

The remedy for these 'problems', Diamond suggested, was to unite Christian forces in economics and politics, so that 'Christianity must rule the Jews, or the Jews will misrule and plunder the Christians'.²⁷

The call to strengthen Christian values in the modern age and the call to convert the Jews were the most common solutions offered in English Catholic newspapers.

²⁴ Canon William Barry: 'The Everlasting Jew', *The Universe*, 12.5.1922, p. 8. *The Universe* had a largely conservative middle class readership. Its owners were equally conservative with the 15th Duke of Norfolk holding one of the largest stakes in the paper. From 1917, *The Universe* was managed by Sir Martin Melvin and edited by H.S. Dean. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 48-49.

²⁵ Diamond: 'The Jew and World Ferment', p. 6. For further examples see Harold D. Wilson: 'Socialism's Failure. Jews and the Christian Religion', *Catholic Times*, 20.9.1919, p. 7. For similar articles in the *Catholic Times* see Bede Jarrett: 'The Chosen People', 1.4.1922, p. 4; William Barry: 'Signs of the Times', 30.10.1920, p. 7; William Barry: 'Our Lady of Sion', 26.8.1922, p. 7; 'Did the Jews Kill Christ / The Jews Rejected Christ', 7.10.1938, p. 12. For the *Catholic Herald*, see the following articles: 'The Jews and our Blessed Lady', 2.8.1924, p. 6; 'Catholics and Jews', 9.5.1925, p. 8; 'A Catholic Opinion on Mission to the Jews', 7.1.1931, p. 4; Arnold Lunn condemned the 'Persecution of the Jews', 11.11.1938, p. 7. Lunn relativised most accusations against the Jews, but left the claim that they were hostile towards the Catholic Church uncontested. For *The Month* see 'The Catholic Guild of Israel', September 1921, pp. 194-97; 'The Conversion of the Jew', August 1924, p. 176.

²⁶ For this and the following quotes see 'The Jewish Question', *Catholic Herald*, 13.9.1919, p. 6.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

Writers also agreed that the 'Jewish question' was not a question of reversing emancipation.²⁸ A similar line was drawn whenever solutions would imply violence and vulgar hatred of the Jew as a Jew.

Although the 'Jewish question' in popular Catholic weeklies bore all the modern elements of the contemporary discussion, it was hardly a systematic discussion but an accumulation of ancient religious and modern antisemitic stereotypes. The question whether the Jews were defined by their faith or by their race remained particularly nebulous. A more elaborate debate on these issues took place in Catholic theological periodicals and on the pages of the *Witness* publications.

The *Witness* publications were all well aware of, if not obsessed by, a 'Jewish question'. The full aspects of the 'Jewish question' were rolled out as early as 1911, when it was essentially considered as a 'race problem'. These detailed articles mostly sprang from the pens of Belloc and Chesterton themselves. Therein they explained how the roots of the 'problem' lay in the Jews' hostility towards Christianity, already apparent in biblical times. In modern time this 'problem' had expanded into a Jewish-masonic conspiracy, so that Jewry had become a threat to Christian British and indeed European civilisation as such.²⁹ According to these publications, the alleged pernicious influence of the Jews on domestic politics and foreign affairs was the principal explanation for wars and crisis.³⁰

Since Belloc and Chesterton saw the Jews as an irreversibly alien nation within the nation, it was impossible in their eyes to integrate them, as their emancipation had intended. Although conversion to Christianity was seen as the ultimate solution, Belloc and Chesterton suggested the Jews' segregation from Christian British society as a more imminent and political measure:

In other words, the solution of the Jewish Question is *Privilege*, in the old, strict sense of that word. A private law, that is, a special law, distinct from the common, whereby shall be regulated this particular case which is so distinct from every other problem European society has to meet.³¹

²⁸ See, e.g., Barry: 'The Everlasting Jew', p. 8.

²⁹ *New Witness* (NW), 30.4.1920, pp. 441-42.

³⁰ *G.K.'s Weekly* (GKW), 31.10.1925, p. 2. Holmes: *Antisemitism in British Society*, p. 204.

³¹ NW, 26.10.1911, pp. 588-89.

As a consequence of such a measure, Jews would have been registered and encouraged to live strictly within their own community. According to Belloc, this solution was necessary because 'it is not a question of religion, it is a question of race.'³²

In the course of the 1920s and 1930s only a few authors reiterated Belloc's argument in Catholic publications. An interesting example is that of the Distributist Stanley B. James. Contrary to the contemporary widespread assumption that history and religious customs shape a people's character, James proclaimed that the Jews' race determined their faith:

Judaism for instance starts with certain racial characteristic and builds on them a religion calculated to meet their needs and to exult their importance. It makes God, as was said, the servant instead of the Lord of a certain people. Catholicism on the other hand, draws its recruits from all quarters and out of this raw material supplied by the ethnological varieties to be found in the world, fashions without obliterating the natural differences therein expresses a new type. [...] It may be that, at some far off date, the final clash of warring elements in this world will come between those who represent the religion that is based on natural consanguinity and those whose religion has created between them a supernatural consanguinity. Catholic and Jew may yet prove to be the final, surviving protagonists in the struggle for the mastery of the world.³³

Msgr Canon Jackman, former private secretary of Cardinal Bourne, also assumed that the 'otherness' of the Jews was determined by their race. In an article in October 1938, Canon Jackman reworked the ancient claim of a Jewish conspiracy against Christianity and found an explanation for this hostility in Jewish 'racialism':

Racialism has been condemned by the Church as incompatible with Christianity. But all heresies start from a certain amount of truth, and in this case, racialism was at the outset a system of protection for the race, which in Europe and in America, was being studiously undermined by the Jews and freemasons, a powerful combination. [...] This powerful combination set about its task by means of an immoral literature, in order to undermine the moral stamina of the race. This being accomplished, the next step is to set Christian nations by the ears, and make them go for each other's throat. That will eliminate the youth of those nations, leaving only elderly and C3 people to deal with. After that the combination thought it would be master of the situation to monopolise in its own hand power and wealth.³⁴

³² Ibidem, pp. 588-89.

³³ Stanley B. James: 'The New Race', *The Month*, November 1925, pp. 400-401. The Second World War and gradually emerging knowledge about the extent of the Jewish persecution did not change James' interpretation of the 'Jewish question'. He still read the world with a racist textbook. Stanley B James: 'World Citizenship. Nationalism and Racialism have Failed. Spiritual Unity in Temporal Diversity will Succeed', *Catholic Herald*, 2.1.1942, p. 6.

³⁴ Msgr Canon Jackman: 'A Snare is Set to Lead the World in Ruin', *Catholic Times*, 21.10.1938, p. 15. Similarly see Shane Leslie: 'The Jews', *Catholic Times*, 29.4.1922, p. 10.

While the *Witness* publications portrayed the 'Jewish question' as a race problem, *The Month* and *The Blackfriars* were most likely to approach this 'question' from a predominantly theological angle. Most articles referred to the 'witness-people' theology in Catholic teaching, where the existence of the Jews – or Israel – served as confirmation of the Christian faith. In their dispersal and suffering after Christ's crucifixion, the Jews were witnesses to his divinity. Moreover, at the end of time their conversion to Christianity would fulfil old prophecies and attest to the truth of the Christian creed. For contemporary theologians the Jewish problem then consisted of the consciousness of the Jews' religious-metaphysical significance: 'Its path is marked by its inclusions in the spiritual destiny of the whole history of the world, at the heart of which it has its special calling: to be the people of God.'³⁵ Subsequently, to many theologians, but particularly to those who worked actively towards the conversion of the Jews, antisemitism was a reaction to Israel's spiritual mission in the history of the world:

The hatred of the Jews inspired, ultimately, by the fact that he bears witness to the absolute in a world which hates the absolute. The Jews, we learn in the scriptures, are a stiff-necked, and a stone-hearted people, but in those very faults there is a strength, [...] which has enabled them through centuries of persecution, to cling to their faith and their worship. [...] To them we owe much of our liturgy, our religious poetry, our philosophy, the very idiom in which as Christians we enshrine our thought.³⁶

Yet however sympathetic the religious interpretation of the 'Jewish question', it was not always free of secular negative stereotypes. Articles on the religious-metaphysical significance of the Jews to the Catholic faith still referred to the alleged usury and immorality of modern Jews.³⁷ *The Month* under the editorship of Joseph Keating, SJ, was specifically alert to the alleged link between Jewry and socialism. This assumption led him to approve of the antisemitic legislation in Admiral Nicholas Horthy's Hungary, when the majority of Catholic publications favoured stronger Catholic morals as 'solution' rather than discrimination. In his article 'Catholic Prospects of Hungary', Keating described over several paragraphs how Catholics were 'under the financial domination of its million Jews', and pointed to

³⁵ E. Lampert: 'The Paths of Israel', *The Blackfriars*, April 1942, pp. 143-47.

³⁶ Gerald Vann: 'The Jews', *The Blackfriars*, June 1939, p. 417. 'Notes of the Week. Pray for the Jews', *Catholic Times*, 31.3.1939, p. 12.

³⁷ Lampert: 'The Paths of Israel', pp. 143-47. Vann: 'The Jews', p. 417.

the Jews' 'share in the Sarajevo murders, the notorious crimes and the treacheries ... during the war'. He concluded,

but the measure of political wisdom attained [meaning the majority of a Catholic party under Horthy] was shown in the passing of a law forbidding the universities to admit more than 12 percent of Jewish students! Not by raised tempers [...] but by fostering Christian education, can the undue influence of the Hebrew be controlled.³⁸

At a time when the advantages and disadvantages of eugenics were widely discussed in the British public, the meaning and implications of 'race' gained more attention. In most Catholic publications examined here, the term 'race' was often used to describe the Jews as a nation, or as an ethnic group determined by their culture and history. The term was, however, always used to describe Jews as a separate entity. In the end, a combination between ethnic, religious and racial determinants defined 'the Jew' in the eyes of most Catholic authors. The majority of these references to 'race' were based on the Lamarckian theory that social and cultural environments shape a people's hereditary physical and mental characteristics.³⁹ Like the authors of the *Witness* press, these examples from the popular press also saw the Jews as a separate and alien people, but their 'Jewish question' was not a 'racial question'. They consequently did not offer solutions' to a 'racial question'. The remedies suggested here remained in the field of Christian religion (conversion) and Christian morals (strengthening of the same). Even the Catholic Guild of Israel (CGI), a Catholic mission to the Jews, tried to accommodate the novel race theory in its own way.⁴⁰ A biological determinism would, it was believed, suffocate the mission's attempts to

³⁸ Joseph Keating: 'Catholic Prospects of Hungary', *The Month*, November 1923, pp. 440-41.

³⁹ Michael Burleigh, Wolfgang Ippermann: *The Racial State. Germany 1933-1945*, Cambridge, 1991, p. 32.

⁴⁰ The Catholic Guild of Israel was founded as a branch of the Archconfraternity of Prayers for the Conversion of Israel in London in December 1917. The records of the mission cited in this thesis are with the Sisters of Sion, Notting Hill, London. Thereafter cited as CGI. CGI, Minute Book, I (1921-28). For the complete text of the constitution of the Catholic Guild of Israel see examples attached to Hewison's letter, 28.2.1920. AAW, Bo 5 / 62. The CGI soon received acknowledgement and support from the Vatican and the English Catholic hierarchy. Letter Cardinal Laurenti, Rome, to CGI, 25.6.1922. CGI, Correspondence. The majority of the Guild's members and associates were members of the clergy or religious orders. At the annual meeting of the Guild in 1927, the list of religious orders supporting the Archconfraternity throughout the world included Dominicans, Benedictines, Augustians, St Francis, Jesuits, Carmelites, Poor Clares, Sisters of St John the Baptist. Minutes Annual Meeting, 28.10.1927. CGI, Minute Book, I (1921-28). By the end of 1924 the Guild had expanded nationally and internationally with members across Great Britain, in Chile, Barcelona, Madrid, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium and India. CGI Minutes Annual Meeting, 28.11.1924. In the case of India, the editor of the *Catholic Herald* in India thought it would be wise to convert Jews in India before the 'Jewish question' existed there. Report April 1925. CGI, Minute Book, I (1921-28).

convert Jews to Catholicism. At a symposium on the causes of antisemitism in Vauxhall in January 1926, Fr Day of the CGI pointed out that the old idea that the Jew by race must be a Jew by religion was out of touch with modern conditions, and, in fact, the time had come when two different terms were desirable to denote the Jew either racially or religiously. The terms 'Hebrew' and 'Jew' or 'Israelite' and 'Judaist' were suggested to meet the need.⁴¹

It is worthwhile devoting more thought to the Catholic Guild of Israel. In the period between 1924 and 1929, publications of this Catholic mission to the Jews contributed to a considerable extent to a sustained discussion of a 'Jewish question' in English Catholic newspapers.⁴² The Guild's method also included more practical means such as preaching in churches, city halls and at street corners, particularly amongst the Jewish population of London's East End. Within a period of only four years, the Guild increased its presence in the streets of London from forty meetings in the first year (1920) to around 150 meetings in 1924, reaching between sixty and one hundred listeners each time, mostly from a working-class background.⁴³ Furthermore, its use of racial images of Jews in a predominantly religious context (conversions) challenges the defensive claim that Catholic antagonism towards Jews was a form of religious anti-Judaism rather than of modern antisemitism, because Catholicism would always welcome Jewish conversions and therefore offer an escape from 'Jewishness'. The publications of the CGI in fact reflect the same antisemitic stereotypes popular at the time, such as the image of the 'Jewish financier' or 'Jewish' socialism, and the claim of an undue Jewish dominance in British society. The Dominican Bede Jarret, president of the CGI until his death in

⁴¹ Reported in 'Causes of Antisemitism', *Catholic Herald*, 30.1.1926, p. 9. James W. Poynter: 'The Church and the Jews', *Catholic Times*, 31.3.1923, p. 10. Reginald Ginn: 'The Conversion of the Jew', *The Month*, August 1924, p. 174.

⁴² The CGI mainly published in following papers and journals: *The Rosary*, *Stella Maris*, *The Catholic Mission*, *Universe*, *Catholic Times*, *Irish Catholic*, *Catholic Herald*, *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, *The Annales of Holy Childhood*, *The Lamp*, *The Antidote*, *Truth*, *America*, *The Missionary*, Minutes Half Annual Meeting, 21.11.1921. CGI, Minute Book, I (1921-28). Its own literature was published by the Catholic Truth Society, including *The Journal of the Guild of Israel*, founded in 1917, and a small half-yearly newspaper launched in spring 1925 due to the increasing interest in its work. Report Jan-March 1925. CGI, Minute Book, I (1921-28).

⁴³ A regular audience of between twenty to sixty listeners seems a realistic estimate, although the Guild's estimates were higher. According to its sources their speakers had an audience of around sixty and later between 150 and 300. General Meeting Report, 25.1.1922. On the numbers of talks given see Minutes Annual Meeting, 28.11.1924. Both in CGI, Minute Book, I (1921-28). On the large number of working-class Jews and non-Jews see the Guild's newsletter *Catholic Guild of Israel and the Arch-Confraternity of Prayer*, Summer 1933, p. 2.

1931, made it quite clear that conversions were not just an issue for the pious when he introduced the aims and purpose of the mission in various Catholic newspapers in 1921. In his account, an overwhelmingly negative Jewish influence lay at the roots of the social problems of the time. By converting the Jews to Catholicism, the CGI consequently solved these social problems by defusing the danger Jews posed to Christian society. The theological meaning of Jewish conversion, namely the fulfilment of god's revelations, appeared almost as an afterthought:

I must admit that it came to me rather as a shock, a bewilderment, to find that Judaism could still be considered a religion at all. One had got to think of it almost entirely in terms of finance or of politics, or of arts, or perhaps of a wise sanitary code. English public life has also come under the influence, the steady increasing influence, of political Judaism. We see the signs of its dominance everywhere in all other countries as well as in our own. But here it holds many important positions in the government, it has 'cornered' India. And of course Palestine. [...] There is then no reason for wondering at the power the Jews wield today. The Jew finds himself in a civilisation which is based on capitalism, [...] and money is his flair. Industrial labour has no interest for him, and agricultural labour even less. Therefore he will never go back to Palestine where the wealth is almost entirely in agriculture. Indeed, why should he worry over Palestine when he has the whole world at his feet. Yes the world is at his feet, for he controls the complete social scale, ruling at one end of it and revolting at the other. Indeed, he is by nature a revolutionary. Why? Chiefly because he is by nature religious, and every religion is a revolution. In Russia they have opposed the faith of Christendom, called it the opiate of the people, and are therefore in revolt. They have converted it to Judaism in England and therefore are in power. After all the Jew is nearly always a man of ideals, not wholly devoted to finance. He has shown himself a capable artist, a musician, a political leader, he has been a General in the British Army, a Lord Chief of Justice, a Prime Minister. Even were one to grant that the Jew may have often climbed to power through injustice one would only thereby give a stronger reason for visiting his need for our prayers and his capacity for conversion. We venture, therefore, to appeal to Catholics to interest themselves in the Jewish problem, to realise its importance to treat it sympathetically [...] but only that no one should set an obstacle in the way of the return of Israel from its long captivity.⁴⁴

As already mentioned, the CGI also took part in the then fashionable discussions surrounding race and race theory and Guild members commented on the qualities and nature of the Jewish race on numerous occasions. A representative example is a newspaper article that gave the following reason why the Guild prayed for the conversion of Israel:

⁴⁴ The article was praised at the Half Annual Meeting, 27.11.21 as: 'The most important of these articles was that of our President the very Rev Fr Bede Jarrett, which took the first place in the September number of *The Month* and was re-edited by Canon Rothwell in the Manchester magazine *The Harvest*.' CGI, Minute Book, I (1921-28). For the complete text of the article see *The Month*, September 1921, pp. 193-97.

For the Jews are more than a nation [...] they are a race, they are the human race in type, by God's own selection and degree. He it was who hedged them around by the fence of the Law to keep them thus typical. This is why, apart from the grace of God, they are so typically bad.⁴⁵

'Race', as used by members of the CGI, did not include biological determinism. Yet it was still a determinism, defined by either god or ethnicity, and thus hardly reversible through emancipation or (paradoxically) through conversion. According to the Guild, this determinism would, however, not preclude Jewish conversion to Catholicism, because, as Vera Tefler (another Guild member) asserted, Jews could preserve their race while practising the Catholic faith: 'However much a Jew thinks he has cast off the race it will still be with him since man cannot alter his ethnological division.'⁴⁶

The change to a racial definition of the Jews appears to be a self-defeating measure on the part of the Guild. There are two main reasons that explain why the Guild adopted the theme of Jewish racial characteristics. This new emphasis was on one hand a reflection of the general discussion of the 'Jewish question' in the late 1920s and early 1930s, when the Eugenic Society, British Fascists at home and National Socialists in Germany promoted the race theme.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the Guild had only seen frustratingly low numbers of conversions (about five per year). The explanation for this meagre success was seen on one hand in the racial character of the Jews that was difficult to assimilate. On the other hand, the Guild leadership assumed that Jews were reluctant to convert to Catholicism because they feared to lose all ties to their Jewish community while they might not be accepted in Christian society either. The Guild's emphasis on the unchangeable racial character of Jews confined 'Jewishness' to race and separated it from religious practice. This was to

⁴⁵ 'Why We Pray for the Conversion of Israel?' Newscutting, April 1922. CGI, Miscellaneous Box. See also James W. Poynter: 'Some Jewish Views on Christianity', *The Month*, October 1921, p. 306. For other examples see Vann: 'The Jews', p. 417.

⁴⁶ Vera Tefler: 'Is the Jew an Anomaly?', *The Tablet*, 12.7.1924, p. 5. On the divine definition of race see CGI lecture given by the Guild associate, Brother G Burns, SJ, to the novices, scholastic juniors and lay brothers of Manresa House, Roehampton, July 1922. CGI, Miscellaneous Box.

⁴⁷ Chris Clark in his study on a Prussian Protestant mission made a similar observation and found that missionaries often shared the same fears and prejudices about Jews as society as a whole. Chris Clark: *The Politics of Conversion. Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia 1728-1941*, Oxford, 1995, p. 4.

ensure converts that they need not cut their family ties, but could become Jewish Catholics.⁴⁸

The Guild certainly held the same secular anti-Jewish stereotypes prevalent at the time and accepted the existence of a 'Jewish question', but it was not motivated by hatred. Catholic conversion efforts were largely supported by religious orders (many female), the clergy and pious Catholics. Guild members would speak of their love for those who they regarded as god's chosen people. They were guided by a religious zeal and the positive image of the biblical Jews. In this mindset, modern Jews were often referred to as errant children who needed to be led back onto the right path. The Guild's language gradually lost its hostile edge and its members attempted to refrain from antisemitic statements in general. From 1932, the mission began to condemn antisemitism and the British Union of Fascists.⁴⁹ The response to National Socialist antisemitism and the persecution of the Jews was likewise unequivocally negative. This is the Catholic anti-Judaism to which the Vatican's 'We Remember' referred and was certainly less hostile than that of the *Witness* publications. Nonetheless it should not be forgotten that it used the same secular antisemitic stereotypes and thereby confirmed and perpetuated these prejudices. The work of the CGI never managed to educate Catholics on the reality of modern Jewish life in Britain, instead it kept the 'Jewish question' with all its religious and modern antisemitic stereotypes alive in Catholic public discourse.

2.1.2 *Antisemitism over Time*

It is instructive to look at the distribution of antisemitic articles in the papers over time, as it allows interpretations of the motive and purpose of these articles. Their frequency contributes to the answer to the question of how central antisemitism was to the worldview of these publications.

⁴⁸ The CGI Report New Year 1934 announced new projects in the form of study circles to understand the Jewish mentality better and combat antisemitism more successfully. Minutes Annual Meeting, 24.10.1934 on the practical question of assimilation. Apparently, some conversion candidates said that they wanted to keep their family links and their 'Jewishness' and thus could not become Catholics. CGI, Minute Book, III (1933-39).

⁴⁹ Minutes Annual Meeting, 24.10.1934. CGI, Minute Book, III (1933-39). Also Report April-June 1932 against National Socialist antisemitism. CGI, Minute Book, II (1928-32).

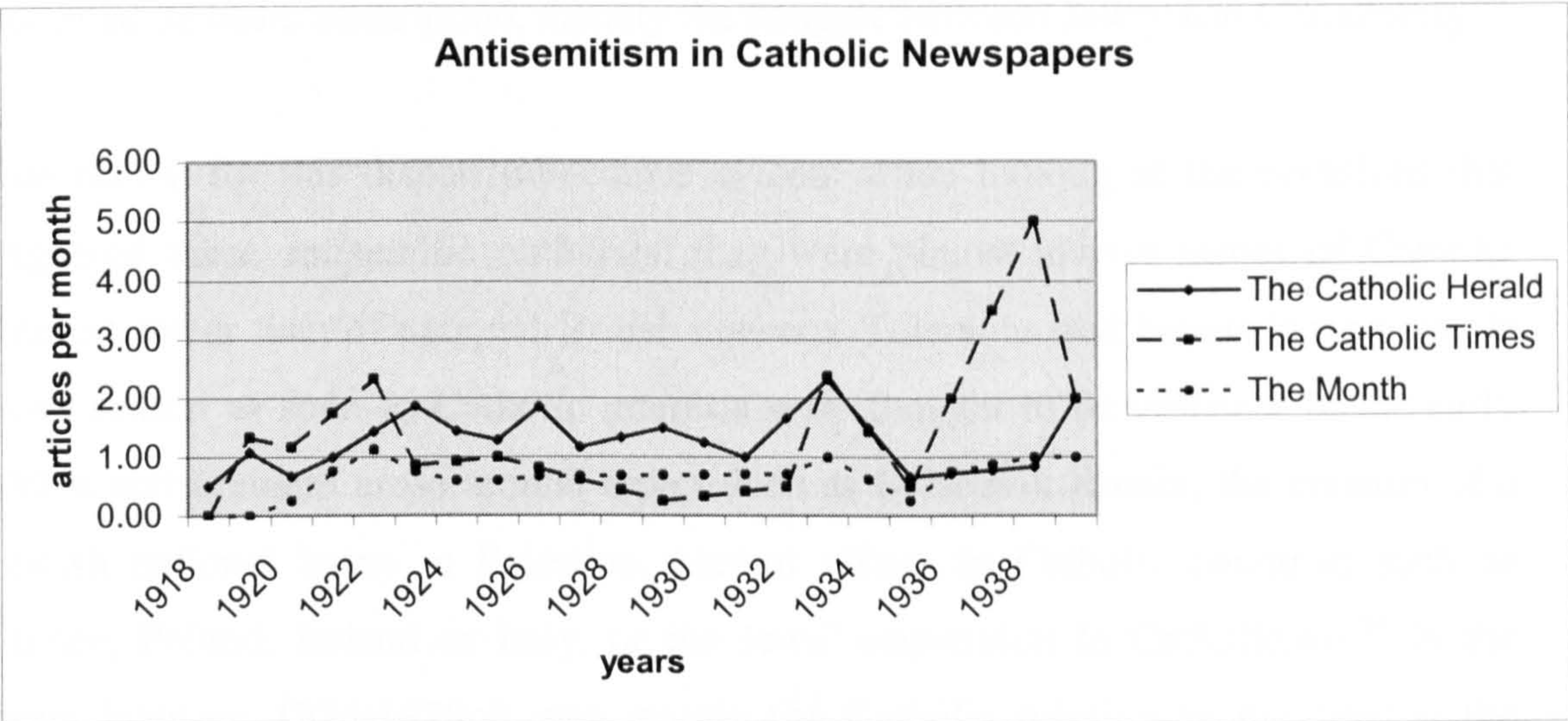


Table 1

Two observations can be made. Firstly, the intensity of antisemitic articles oscillates with peaks around 1923, 1933 and 1938/39.⁵⁰ This suggests that these antisemitic outbursts were motivated by particular external events rather than being a constant Catholic obsession. Secondly, the outburst in 1938/9 occurred anti-cyclically to the national concern with a ‘Jewish question’, when most broadsheet English newspapers made only moderate use of antisemitism.⁵¹ On the other side, antisemitism in Catholic newspapers was comparatively restrained when the general public was overcome by ‘Jewish-Bolshevik’ scare-mongering or by the phantom of Jewish world conspiracy. When in 1920 the *Morning Post* and *The Times* printed the ‘Protocols of Zion’, stirring up a wave of antisemitic feelings over the following two years, the *Catholic Times* ignored it altogether and *The Month* maintained that the ‘Protocols’ were just ‘bogus documents’ which endangered religious peace.⁵² Only Charles Diamond of the Catholic Herald commented on the ‘Protocols’ in a review

⁵⁰ Besides the peak years when antisemitism was rampant, Catholic newspapers still published on average one antisemitic article per month every fourth issue. This amount could easily increase by 150% whenever Catholic interests were seen to be at risk. For the table on which the graph was built and an explanation on the method used see appendix.

⁵¹ The British press only gradually recognised the extent of German antisemitism in the first two years of Hitler’s chancellorship. This often very ambiguous attitude changed into a clearer condemnation of antisemitism with *Kristallnacht* in 1938. Andrew Sharf: *The British Press and the Jews under Nazi Rule*, Oxford, 1964, p. 42. See, however, Tony Kushner who found that especially the Tory press and the tabloids continued their anti-Jewish comments during the war. He singles out *Truth*, the Rothermere and Beaverbrook press and on the left *The Forward* of the Independent Labour Party. Kushner: *Persistence of Prejudice*, pp. 79-84.

⁵² ‘Exit. “The Protocols”’, *The Month*, June 1935, p. 490. On the impact of the ‘Protocols’ on Jew-hatred, Norman Cohn: *Warrant for Genocide. The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of Zion*, London, 1996.

article and admitted that the accusation of the 'Protocols' seemed deranged, but accepted its basic assumption, namely the struggle between Jewry and Christianity.⁵³

The reason for this disparity becomes evident when looking at the occasions that triggered these antisemitic outbursts: they were almost always issues of Catholic interest rather than of national British concern. Tolerance and benevolence towards Jews ceased as soon as Catholic interests were thought to be violated. In the early 1920s antisemitism arose around topics such as Bolshevik Russia, the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine, current affairs in Catholic countries such as France, Poland, Ireland or Italy, or the Jews' conversion to Catholicism.⁵⁴ In the years between 1924-1929 it was mainly the Catholic mission to the Jews – the Catholic Guild of Israel – that kept the discussion on the 'Jewish question' alive.

2.1.2.1 The Belated Discovery of the 'Jewish Bolshevik', 1919-1923

Reports on communist Russia are examples of this defence mechanism. From 1921 onwards, Catholic newspapers highlighted the suppression of religion in Soviet Russia. The already latent equation of Jews with Bolsheviks gradually became a constant rhetorical feature in articles on Russia and brought the intensity of antisemitic articles to an unprecedentedly high level with the execution of Bishop Budkiewicz in Moscow in 1923. Yet Bolshevik Russia had not always been such an emotional topic.

During the war and until the early 1920s antisemitism in Britain (coupled with anti-German sentiments) was widespread and at times violent. From 1917 the US and Western Europe was swept by a 'red scare' that merged with the 'German menace' originating before the First World War. In Britain, anti-Bolshevism spread to various sections of society including political, military and diplomatic circles and the press. This anti-Bolshevism was closely linked with a preoccupation with an over-

⁵³ Charles Diamond in the *Catholic Herald*, 20.3.1920, p. 5. Three extensive articles on 'Freemasonry' and on 'Jewry' followed Diamond's review article over the next three months – all of them not flattering to Jews. 'Freemasonry', *Catholic Herald*, 5.6.1920, p. 4. 'Jewry', *Catholic Herald*, 23/26.6.1920, p. 4 / p. 11.

⁵⁴ Diamond: 'The Day of the Jews', *Catholic Herald*, 15.3.1919, p. 5. For Ireland see 'The Ulster Planter', *Catholic Herald*, 31.5.1919, p. 7. For Poland see 'Jewish Pogroms in Poland', *Catholic Herald*, 5.7.1919, p. 7.

representation of Jews on the more extreme fringes of European socialism. The result was a reworking of the Jewish conspiracy myth, which was given a tremendous boost by the publication of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁵⁵ Sharman Kadish has interpreted the agitation against 'Jewish Bolshevism' in *The Times* and *The Morning Post* as a political means of supporting the British Government's policy of military aid to White Guard generals – the very same generals who were alleging 'Jewish' Bolshevism as a pretext for their pogroms in the Pale of Settlement.⁵⁶

Whereas the antisemitism of the Tory press was motivated by nationalism, the defence mechanisms of the Catholic press were not stimulated by patriotism or nationalism, with the exception of the *Witness* publications. While the *Morning Post* and *The Times* exposed the alleged evil of Russian Bolshevism engineered by Jews, Catholic newspapers initially called for a more considered coverage. For example, Joseph Keating writing in *The Month*:

Generalisation is largely an automatic function of the intellect: we think in classes and categories and, under the spur of fear, the unbalanced mind is apt to see Jews or Jesuits or Bolsheviks everywhere. The remedy is to go by evidence and to make sure that it is real.⁵⁷

Nor did Charles Diamond of the *Catholic Herald* link Bolshevism with Jewish influence – at least not until 1921. He was more interested in disclosing 'conspiracies' closer to home: Jewish financiers together with 'Huns and Junkers' were perceived to be in an alliance to exploit the poor.⁵⁸ Diamond's real target was the 'establishment'. He initially supported Lenin as 'the greatest man', welcomed the land redistribution, and the attempt to educate the lower classes by providing cheap books and cultural events. He interpreted the anti-Bolshevik hysteria of the Tory press from a communist point of view as a ploy to distract public opinion from capitalist crimes:

⁵⁵ For manifestations of antisemitism in Britain in the early 1920s see Gisela Lebzelter: *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939*, London, 1978, pp. 13-29.

⁵⁶ Sharman Kadish: 'Boche, Bolshie and the Jewish Bogey. The Russian Revolution and Press Antisemitism in Britain 1917-21', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 22 (1988), 24-39, (p. 24).

⁵⁷ Joseph Keating: 'Topics of the Month. The Folly of Bigotry', *The Month*, August 1921, p. 177. For the *Catholic Times* see Sidney Weir: 'War with Russia?', *Catholic Times*, 4.1.1919, p. 5.

⁵⁸ For the effect of the Marconi affair see 'Things to Remember', *Catholic Herald*, 12.4.1919, p. 5; 'How the Nation is Plundered', *Catholic Herald*, 25.1.1919, p. 5.

Meantime the cry about the Jew is a last desperate resort of the Huns in the press, and in Parliament and elsewhere, to divert attention from their own crimes and to distract the public mind by dishonest irrelevancies. [...] We infinitely prefer to stand beside the revolutionary in his assaults upon the evils that obtain rather than on the platform with the authors and defenders of these infamies.⁵⁹

However, this generous mood soon changed. By April 1921, the *Catholic Herald* was alarmed by anti-religious measures in Russia and the continued suppression of the peasantry. This was also the moment when the paper discovered the 'Jew Bolshevik' – a label that would from now on accompany almost every article on communist Russia:

[F]rom the upheaval of the war emerged the opportunity of the Communists to put their theories into practice on a huge scale. They have tried to do so. Now the theories are not really Russian. They are those of the German Jew, Karl Marx. The Bolshevik leaders are his disciples to some extent only, for they have had to abandon pure Marxism. Nor are all the theorists themselves Russians. Trotzky and a great many others are Jews. [...] Upon Russia and the Russian peasantry they have imposed their authority, having exterminated whole hecatombs of opponents – socialists, anarchists, capitalists, ruling classes, traders, and revolting peasantry also.⁶⁰

As in 1919, there was an explosion of antisemitic articles in Catholic newspapers after Bishop Budkiewicz was imprisoned and executed in Moscow in spring 1923.⁶¹ This came at a time when, according to Sharman Kadish, the myth of a Jewish conspiracy had moved to the extreme fringe of society due to the strength of the liberal tradition in Britain.⁶² However, in 1923 even the more considerate *The Month* was enraged:

[I]n Soviet Russia Manning's prophecy has actually been realized. Antichrist, in the person of those apostate Jews, is already in power. Marx, another apostate Jew, is his evangelist and Christianity, especially the Catholicism of Rome is the object of bitterest hatred.⁶³

⁵⁹ Diamond: 'The Jew and World Ferment', p. 6. Diamond nevertheless considered the Jews as 'questionable allies' and had confirmed the *Morning Post*'s prejudices against Jews in earlier articles. For pro-Lenin quotes see his articles 'The Bolsheviks', *Catholic Herald*, 8.3.1919, p. 4; 'Who are the Bolsheviks?', *Catholic Herald*, 15.3.1919, p. 8.

⁶⁰ 'A Prisoner of the Reds. Who is Who in Bolshevism', *Catholic Herald*, 7.5.1921, p. 10.

⁶¹ See 'The Bolshevik Blasphemers', *Catholic Herald*, 10.2.1923, p. 6. For later years see articles of the kind: 'At Last, or Jews Criminals Unmentioned', *Catholic Herald*, 2.7.1927, p. 8. 'Russia and Christianity', *Catholic Times*, 30.9.1922, p. 6; 'Our Readers' View. The Jewish Influence in Bolshevism', *Catholic Times*, 10.2.1933, p. 12.

⁶² Kadish: 'Boche, Bolshie and the Jewish Bogey', p. 37.

⁶³ Joseph Keating: 'Topics of the Month. Antichrist in Russia', *The Month*, June 1923, p. 552.

The *Blackfriars*, too, took the phrase that ‘two out of three of Russia’s leaders are Jews’ as a fact and concluded: ‘Evil is enthroned in Moscow.’⁶⁴

2.1.2.2 *Communism, National Socialism, and the Jews, 1929-1939*

Until the boycott of Jewish businesses in April 1933, National Socialism had mostly been discussed in passing notes, which hardly mentioned its fierce antisemitism. After the boycott, Catholic newspapers frequently reported on the fate of the Jews in Germany and condemned the antisemitism displayed there:

The boycott and the measure associated with it have been openly directed against the Jews as a race, even against those Jews who have become Christian. Such an attitude is not only in acute conflict with all modern ideas of civilised government; it is a flagrant repudiation of the whole teaching of the New Testament.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, in 1933 most articles in Catholic newspapers ended on the note that the Jews owed their treatment to their own misbehaviour. A journalist of *The Tablet* condemned the violence that accompanied the boycott of Jewish businesses in April. However, he also acknowledged that he could understand the Germans’ reaction. They had the same problem: too many rich Jews. Only one objection was raised: Germany should respond to this problem with judicial measures such as a *numerus clausus* for Jews.⁶⁶

Out of eighteen recorded articles on the Jews in Germany (in 1933) in the *Catholic Herald*, only seven wholly deplored their persecution (the majority of which were reports on the bishops’ public denunciation of the Jewish persecution), and eleven ended on an antisemitic note, not dissimilar to that mentioned above. Out of twenty-one articles on Germany and the Jews in the *Catholic Times*, fourteen were antisemitic, only five spoke in favour of the Jews (these were mainly comments by readers), and two found equal arguments in favour of or against the Jews. To some extent this attitude can be seen as a continuation of the anti-German hostility and

⁶⁴ *The Blackfriars*, February 1925, p. 66.

⁶⁵ ‘In Germany’, *The Universe*, 7.4.1933, p. 14.

⁶⁶ *The Tablet*, 1.4.1933, p. 16. More explicit justification of National Socialist antisemitism: Charles Diamond: ‘Hitlerism, Zionism, Nationalism’, *Catholic Herald*, 13.5.1933, p. 13. This article was published in parts over two weeks. Despite its title, the article only briefly deplored the anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish politics of Germany and instead denounced Jewish influence in Palestine, and British politics.

violence during the First World War that often targeted German Jews in particular.⁶⁷ The naivety with respect to the events and policies inside Hitler's Germany was not just a characteristic of Catholic newspapers. According to Richard Griffiths, the British media and therefore public opinion did not show any particular interests in German affairs until 1936 when German affairs became British foreign affairs after Hitler had occupied the Rhineland.⁶⁸

There was, however, a distinct Catholic motive to this attitude. The perceived need to protect Catholic interests was expressed in some cases as an open antisemitism. The question arises as to what sort of Catholic interest there was to safeguard in Germany, a country where two thirds of the population were Protestants (better known to English Catholic readers as 'Prussians') and at a time when the Catholic Church was not yet oppressed. By 1933 several events had happened in the Catholic world that had created a sense of persecution in some Catholics' minds. News of religious persecution in Russia and Mexico and the revolution in Spain in 1932 had left the impression that Catholics suffered even crueller persecution than the Jews in Germany. Yet these events received far less news coverage than Jews in Nazi Germany – much to the annoyance of Catholics in Britain:

It is true, that Jews, especially the Masonic Jews [...] are the bitter and persistent foes of the Catholic Church. [...] In Rome a notorious Jewish Freemason, Nathan, signalised his position as Mayor of the city by a most disgraceful and wanton insult to the Pope of the day. In Spain the recent revolution has had wholesale Jewish support, and Einstein, a Jewish agnostic, is to go to Madrid as Professor to replace and oppose Catholic influence. [...] Whenever it can do so, Jewry is the leading and bitter enemy of the Catholic Church. [...] But we would ask all fair minded men to contrast the callous silence or approval with which the world as a whole has looked on while [...] tyrants have trampled upon and plundered Catholics, and the generous outbursts that have taken place against wicked, but far less atrocious attacks on Jews in Germany.⁶⁹

In contrast to the *Catholic Herald*, where the silence of the British press towards the Catholic persecution was of central concern, the antisemitic articles of the *Catholic*

⁶⁷ Holmes: *Antisemitism in British Society*, pp. 137-205. After the war, Catholic newspapers still ran articles that took it as a fact, that German Jews were spies and instigators of the war for their own profits. E.g., Diamond: 'The Jew and the World Ferment', p. 6. 'Notes of the Week. Polish Bolshevism', *Catholic Times*, 15.2.1919, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Richard Griffiths: *Fellow Travellers of the Right. British Enthusiasm for Nazi Germany, 1933-39*, London, 1980, p. 10.

⁶⁹ 'Jews and Catholics. Jewry a Bitter Enemy of the Church', *Catholic Herald*, 22.4.1933, p. 5.

Times continuously argued that the persecution of the Jews in Germany was justified, because they together with communism and freemasonry had caused today's international distress.⁷⁰ How unrelenting some authors of the *Catholic Times* could be in this matter is shown by an example published just after the boycott of Jewish businesses in Germany. Justifying their view against some readers' dismayed complaints, the editor answered:

What we have pointed out was that international Jewry, as exemplified in international Masonry was a heinous thing, and its stamping out in Germany could be not less beneficial than in Italy. With the persecution of individual law abiding and God-fearing Jews we can have no patience, but to a nationalistic thrust at an international force or 'ring' in Germany or elsewhere, we must adopt a different attitude.⁷¹

At the same time the papers were embroiled in a discussion on a Jewish-masonic conspiracy. This allegation was not new by 1933. In the papers under consideration it repeatedly appeared since 1926, intensified by 1932 and culminated in 1938. In the earlier years of 1926 and 1932, the notion of a Jewish conspiracy sprung from publications on freemasonry by two Irish priests, Fr Cahill and Fr Fahey.⁷² In 1938 the *Catholic Times* printed long extracts of Fr Denis Fahey's book *The Mythical Body of Christ* and gave him considerable space to express his idea of a Judeo-masonic conspiracy.⁷³

To a number of Catholic writers, Fahey's theory seemed eventually confirmed by the creation of the Second Spanish Republic in 1931 and later in the Spanish Civil War. F.M. de Zulueta wrote in *The Month* of freemasonry as the secret agent of all European revolutions, funded 'from Moscow through the medium of Jewish

⁷⁰ 'Notes of the Week. Herr Hitler and the Jews', *Catholic Times*, 31.3.1933, p. 10.

⁷¹ 'Our Readers and the Jews', *Catholic Times*, 7.4.1933, p. 10.

⁷² Fr Fahey was a Holy Ghost priest and Professor of Philosophy and Church History at the Senior Scholasticate of the Irish Province of the Holy Ghost Fathers in the suburbs of Dublin. He was a prominent figure in Ireland and the United States (where he was in contact with the notorious antisemitic 'radio-priest' Fr Coughlin).

⁷³ For a review of his books see *Catholic Times*, 23.9.1938, p. 8. For his own contributions see, e.g., *Catholic Times*, 28.10.1938, p. 11; 4.11.1938, p. 9. His thesis was thus: the divine programme had been proclaimed by Christ when he came to earth but was rejected by his own nation, the Jews. This incident became crucial to world history. In the thirteenth century Western Europe almost achieved the 'concrete realisation' of this programme – the medieval guild system which ensured that Christianity and citizenship was not separated in social life or education. From then on there was only 'steady decay', manifested in the Reformation, the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. Fahey believed that communism was a revolt against god, that this threat against the Roman Catholic Church emanated from the organised forces of naturalism: in an invisible form by Satan and 'his fellow demons' and as a visible force by the Jews and freemasons.

financiers in America. The much-monied Israelite figured prominently in a body devoted to de-Christianising nations.’⁷⁴ *The Blackfriars* printed a plea for ‘cleansing Spain of Freemasons and Jews’ in order to create a new nation.⁷⁵

The preoccupation with Jewish conspirators and financiers made it very difficult to feel sympathy with the situation of German Jews from 1933 onwards. Even more considerate authors, such as Dom Luigi Sturzo, the exiled leader of the Italian Catholic party, were not free from anti-Jewish prejudices, although his condemnation of German antisemitism and racism was sincere and unconditional:

The people are easily roused to racial hatred, especially when the race in question is the Jewish, which has certainly its defects and its faults, especially as regards the indefensible methods of usury and traffic. [...] The Jews scattered over the world are a force.⁷⁶

By the time of *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 all the factors mentioned above had been repeated over and over again in the Catholic newspapers and had almost become common currency. In 1938/9 various incidents sharpened the tone in Catholic newspapers, resulting in another steep peak on the antisemitic-articles-per-month scale. These events were the Spanish Civil War (still), a Freethinkers’ congress in London and *Kristallnacht* in Germany. The first, especially, was accompanied by numerous articles spreading a Jewish-masonic-Bolshevik conspiracy, such as Gregory Macdonald’s article after Franco’s victory over the Republicans in 1939, where he claimed that Franco had won against the ‘wandering Jews’, the ‘advances of the communist hordes. [...] That is the meaning of our victory. It is not over our brothers but a victory over the world, over the international forces, over Communism, Masonry.’⁷⁷

Kristallnacht was a welcome opportunity for some to expound their antisemitic and pro-Nazi views, but the barbarism of the November pogrom met with a clearer

⁷⁴ ‘More Light on the Spanish Revolution’, *The Month*, June 1932, p. 537.

⁷⁵ H. Munoz, OP: ‘Spain, To-day and To-morrow’, *The Blackfriars*, October 1934, p. 659. During the Spanish Civil War, *The Blackfriars* kept however a neutral if not anti-fascist line. James Flint, OSB: “Must God go Fascist?”. English Catholic Opinion and the Spanish Civil War’, *Church History*, 56 (1987), 364-374, (p. 370). The theme of the conspiring Jew and mason in Spain was very common in the *Catholic Times* and to a lesser degree in the *Catholic Herald*. For examples see the *Catholic Times*, 12.5.1933, p. 10, 12; 28.10.1938, p. 11. *Catholic Herald*, 22.4.1933, p. 6; 13.5.1933, p. 4, p. 8; 18.11.1938, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Dom Luigi Sturzo: ‘Hitler’s Germany’, *Catholic Herald*, 22.4.1933, p. 8.

⁷⁷ Gregory Macdonald: ‘The Aftermath of Crisis’, *Catholic Times*, 31.3.1939, p. 7, p. 11.

condemnation in Catholic newspapers.⁷⁸ Still, antisemitic articles outnumbered the columns written in sympathy for the Jews. *The Tablet*, the *Catholic Times* and the *Catholic Herald* did not change their view that the Jews brought their fate upon themselves, despite anger at the brutality of the pogrom:

now in the case of Jewry there is no doubt of it being a hostile element to certain regimes. Jews unlike Catholics, have a loyalty to their own society which is more than spiritual or moral: it is racial and physical.⁷⁹

2.1.3 Positive Articles on Jews

Positive articles on Jews or Judaism were few and far between. They increased in numbers with the onset of the Jewish persecution in Germany from 1933, but still lagged behind the number of antisemitic articles. Again, these articles mostly served a defensive purpose by refuting accusations of intolerance and antisemitism levelled at the Catholic Church. Jews funding Catholic societies, Jews grateful for Catholic assistance, Jews praising Catholic bishops – all these themes found approval in Catholic papers. Similarly, any antisemitic remarks published in the Anglican Church Times were singled out for criticism, although the real aim here was to rebuke the Protestants.⁸⁰ Religious discrimination, an experience Catholics could relate to quite well, had been condemned by the Church for many years. Consequently, any form of religious discrimination against Jews was criticised by Catholic papers, too. In the case of the Liverpool Magistrate who refused to issue a dancing licence to celebrate a Jewish wedding on a Sunday, the *Catholic Herald* maintained that despite the differences between Catholics and Jews such interference in religious traditions was ‘outrageous’.⁸¹

⁷⁸ ‘A Horror-Struck World. A Crime against Mankind’, *The Month*, December 1938, pp. 481-82.

⁷⁹ Michael de la Bédoyère: ‘Ethics of Persecution’, *Catholic Herald*, 25.11.1938, p. 8. De la Bédoyère became editor of the *Herald* in April 1936. Contrary to the article mentioned, Bédoyère had published a compassionate note on *Kristallnacht* two weeks earlier. *Catholic Herald*, 11.11.1938, p. 8. Douglas Jerrold: ‘Playing with World Revolution’, *Catholic Herald*, 2.12.1938, p. 2.

⁸⁰ See, e.g., the *Catholic Times*, 15.4.1922, p. 5; or the *Catholic Herald*, 5.1.1924, p. 3. For a critique of the *Church Times* see ‘Unsubstantiated Charge Against the Jews’, *Catholic Times*, 19.5.1923, p. 9.

⁸¹ ‘Anti-Jewish Magistrates’, *Catholic Herald*, 13.3.1926, p. 8. For a critic of racial and religious discrimination see William Barry: ‘Are Catholics Aliens?’, *Catholic Times*, 10.5.1919, p. 7. After Barry stated that neither Jew nor Catholic should be excluded from the League of Nations on grounds of religion, he then continues to stress Catholics’ loyalty to their country in contrast to the fearful ‘power concentrated in Hebrew international finance’. Defenders of religious freedom could rarely be equalised with philosemites.

Although the *Catholic Herald* had never really abandoned its view that Soviet Russia was ruled by 'a band of Jews', it still regretted religious persecution that also included Jews.⁸² Catholic newspapers were generally firm that the rule of law also applied to Jews. With the exception of the Vilna pogrom in 1919 where they had only grudgingly criticised antisemitic violence, Catholic papers strongly condemned violent Jew-hatred as in the case of antisemitic disturbances in Dublin 1926:

However unselfish the motive of the riots may have been they were a breach of law. It is just as wrong to force a moneylender off his books as of any other form of property. [...] Doubtless the Irish Government will deal sharply with the incident.⁸³

2.1.4 Responses to Catholic Newspapers. Jews. Catholics

The Jewish community did not leave these antisemitic outbursts without comment. Jewish newspapers such as the *Jewish Chronicle* or *Jewish World* were renowned for their effort in pointing out antisemitism in the national press and printing rejoinders that confronted myth with fact.⁸⁴

In the late 1930s the Jewish People's Council against Fascism and Antisemitism (JPAFA) would actively fight against fascism by means of public demonstrations and conferences in order to disrupt BUF meetings. The Board of Deputies of British Jews (BOD), on the other hand, called for a quieter and more considerate response to antisemitism in the form of lawsuits and appeals to Parliament. This was a matter on which the BOD, who mostly represented Jewish middle class opinion in England, and the JPAFA, who appealed to working class Jews of London's East End, could not agree upon.

Records of the BOD shed some light on Jewish reactions to the antisemitism in Catholic newspapers. Due to their middle class respectability, the BOD was the more likely addressee for members of the Catholic hierarchy in matters of Catholic-Jewish relations than the JPAFA, who were ignored because of their alleged communist

⁸² 'Down with the Synagogue', *Catholic Herald*, 16.2.1924, p. 6.

⁸³ 'Who Rules in Dublin?' *Catholic Herald*, 24.7.1926, p. 23.

⁸⁴ Dean Rapp: 'The Jewish Response to G.K. Chesterton's Antisemitism, 1911-33', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 24 (1990), 75-86.

links. Direct contacts between Catholic and Jewish communities were, however, rare. Archbishop Downey seems to have been the most accessible Catholic bishop. The BOD set up a Defence Committee that monitored antisemitism in society and in print. The Committee's first reaction to the antisemitism in the *Catholic Herald* was letters to its editor, in which they refuted allegations that Jews were predominantly fraudsters, blasphemous enemies of the Church and Bolsheviks.⁸⁵ However, these letters had no effect on the *Catholic Herald's* portrait of the Jews. Most of these rejoinders were not published at all or they were used 'as peg on which to hang further arguments to the Jews'.⁸⁶ The following letter to the Board in 1932 from the *Catholic Herald* merely restated the prejudices to which the Board had objected:

Whatever may be the attitude of your Board towards the statements made in the article of the 14th instant [...] it is unfortunately true and cannot be denied by any impartial authority that in France and indeed all over Europe the influence of Masonry and Jewish Masonry especially has been constantly exercised against the Catholic Church. Does your Board remember the famous dictum of Gambetta, that 'the day of the priest was over and the day of the Jew had come' and that under his direction nearly every Prefect of France was of the Jewish persuasion? Unfortunately in connection with Revolution the percentage of Jews who have dominated the rule of the Soviets has been enormous. The suggestion that these have not been anti-religious does not admit of discussion. It is no pleasure to the editor to point out what are unfortunately manifest facts and he does not think that a merely religious or national prejudice should lead a representative body such as that for which you speak to make statements that are in the face of all evidence.⁸⁷

Since most of the Committee's complaints to Catholic news editors went unheard, the BOD saw it necessary to bring the Catholic hierarchy's attention to the antisemitic outburst of Catholic newspapers.⁸⁸ Chief Rabbi Hertz was first asked in October 1929 to take up this task. Unfortunately, neither the records of the BOD nor the Westminster Diocesan Archive tell whether Hertz agreed or Cardinal Bourne received such a letter, and if so, how Bourne reacted. The documents are more conclusive for the years 1937/38, a time when the spectre of a Jewish-masonic-

⁸⁵ See, e.g., letter Secretary of BOD to editor of the *Catholic Herald*, 12.7.1928. London Metropolitan Archive (LMA), BO4 CAR 11 Catholic Herald. Numerous similar letters were sent to Charles Diamond since 1924. An additional concern were articles published by the *Catholic Times* that had printed age-old blood libel accusations in 1934. 'Firinne. The Murder of Pedro Arbues', *Catholic Times*, 9.11.1934.

⁸⁶ Letter to Diamond, 8.2.1924. LMA, BO4 CAR 11. For letters being ignored see letter to The New Catholic Press editor, 14.6.1932. LMA, BO4 CAR 13 Correspondence with Catholic Newspapers; internal letter to Zaiman BOD on antisemitism in the *Catholic Times*, 16.1.1933. LMA, BO4 CAR 14 Correspondence with Catholic Times.

⁸⁷ H. Botthill to the secretary of BOD, 11.6.1932. LMA, BO4 CAR 13.

⁸⁸ Letter Sassoon to Rich, 6.7.1929. LMA, BO4 CAR 11.

Bolshevik conspiracy was again conjured up by the publications of Fr Fahey in the *Catholic Times*. A year earlier, the BOD had already remarked on the harmful potential of Fahey's *The Mythical Body of Christ* that thrived to a great extent on vicious attacks on Jews. Fahey's book saw the Jews as prime movers of revolutions and accused them of founding the Soviet Republic and 'phoney' democracies in the West – systems which they allegedly exploited to their own advantage. Large parts of the book dealt with current politics in Ireland, first the alleged influence of masons and Jews, second that the Irish Republic Brotherhood was inspired by Jewish banks. The BOD was, however, more concerned about the approval the book gained from Catholic journals, bishops and the Irish Hierarchy.⁸⁹ Neville Laski contacted Archbishop Downey of Liverpool regarding Fahey's influence among Catholics. Downey answered in June 1936:

[I] noted the passages marked by you. It seems to me quite uncritical, and I will write about it to the bishop who has given an 'Imprimatur'. I have never heard of the author or of the book before. I do not think the publication will carry much weight.⁹⁰

How mistaken Downey was about Fahey's influence is shown in Fahey's numerous articles in Catholic publications, particularly the *Catholic Times*, in 1938 and the favourable responses among the lower clergy. Again, the BOD asked the Catholic hierarchy to intervene with the *Catholic Times* in order to moderate the paper's antisemitism. Since the *Catholic Times* was owned by the Catholic Missionary Society, the Catholic bishops were an obvious contact.⁹¹ Furthermore, after a complaint by the BOD, Cardinal Archbishop Hinsley of Westminster had reprimanded another paper of the Missionary Society, the *Catholic Gazette*, in February 1936 for its favourable views on the 'Protocols of Zion'.⁹² In the matter of the *Catholic Times* in 1937 a letter of recommendation by Archbishop Downey eventually opened the doors to Cardinal Hinsley, but had only limited success in

⁸⁹ The book had a prefatory letter by the Bishop of Waterford and bore the imprimatur – the all-clear-to-publish-stamp – of the Irish hierarchy. Letter of the secretary of the BOD to Rabbi Isaac Herzog, 24.4.1936. LMA, EO3 141 Antisemitic Propaganda and Organisations 1921-37.

⁹⁰ Letter Downey to Laski, 1.6.1936. LMA, BO4 CAR 16 Catholics and Jews.

⁹¹ The Catholic Missionary Society was a congregation of secular priests who wanted to spread the Catholic faith among non-Catholics. The Society's constitution implicitly said that it is under direct control of the hierarchy. Archives of the Archdiocese of Westminster (AAW), Bo 1 / 27, 1904-34 Catholic Missionary Society

⁹² Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 209.

influencing the Catholic papers' attitude towards Jews.⁹³ The response of Cardinal Hinsley's private secretary Msgr Collings left some hope, when he assured the representatives of the BOD that the Cardinal 'has taken steps which he hopes will prove effective to modify the attitude of that paper in the way' the Board desired.⁹⁴ However, the delegation of the Board received by Collings left empty handed.⁹⁵ Complaints about the Catholic newspapers' journalistic practice rarely arose from the Catholic community. In a letter to Bishop Williams of Birmingham, Fr O'Hea of the Catholic Social Guild criticised the *Catholic Times* 'exalted nationalism' and the *Catholic Herald's* crude misinterpretations of Jewish life and its reluctance to print rejoinders. O'Hea insisted that these practices were no trivialities – quite contrary to Downey's dismissive remarks on the importance of such articles:

The trouble is that one finds many Catholics, even undergraduates who believe that the Catholic weekly press is in some way official, and of course a journalist has to write in an authoritative tone [...] Catholics have been constantly told that the Catholic press alone is reliable.⁹⁶

Catholic newspapers were not subject to the internal censorship by the Catholic hierarchy, which was imposed on all theological publications by Catholics. Since they were not the owners of these publications, apart from the *Catholic Times* which was owned by the Catholic Missionary Society, it would have been unmerited interference on their part. Yet in the case of the *Catholic Times* the hierarchy as superior to the Catholic Missionary Society was indeed responsible for the content of this newspaper. The reason why Cardinal Hinsley did not react to the petition of the BOD in this instance is not clear from the sources. One reason might be, as Thomas Moloney suggests in a similar context, that Hinsley did not like to be enlisted for 'particularist courses'.⁹⁷

⁹³ Letter to Archbishop Downey, 24.12.1937. LMA, BO4 CAR 14. A letter of recommendation by Downey is again mentioned when Neville Laski asked Hinsley to join an intercession service against the Jewish persecution in Germany, letter Laski to Hinsley 22.6.1938. AAW, Hi 2 / 125, 1827-32 / 1936-39.

⁹⁴ Letter Collings to Mr Kraft, 16.1.1938. LMA, BO4 CAR 14.

⁹⁵ The delegation consisted of three persons, Mr Salomon, Dr Singer and Mrs Beer. Letter Salomon to N. Laski, 21.1.1938. LMA, BO4 CAR 14. Bertram B. Benas returned with a similar response by Archbishop Downey when they met to discuss the *Catholic Herald's* antisemitism in September 1940: 'Theologically it (*Catholic Herald*) kept correct and thus made it difficult to bring it directly under ecclesiastical censure, but [...] that did not prevent expression of ecclesiastical disapproval and admonition from the right quarter and His Grace would take steps to see through that quarter that such a course would be taken.' LMA, BO4 CAR 11.

⁹⁶ Letter O'Hea to Bishop Williams, 27.9.1938. BAA, AP / S8 / CSG 13

⁹⁷ Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 206.

Yet it was not the case that Catholic lay media enterprises existed in isolation from the influence of the Catholic hierarchy. On the contrary, the editors of *The Tablet*, *The Universe*, and the *Catholic Times* were in regular and amicable contact with members of the hierarchy and their secretaries.⁹⁸ These relations were used on other occasions to influence which news would not go to press. These were occasions unrelated to theological questions and therefore – if the bishops' words to the BOD were true – beyond their influence. A statement by Msgr Collings on the relationship between the press and the hierarchy is revealing:

I stated that the Cardinal had no central control over the press, but it was suggested to me that if His Eminence desired to do so it must surely be apparent to everybody that an intimation by him, or his brother Bishops that it was not their desire that certain matters should be referred to in the Catholic press, would be readily accepted by the owners of the papers.⁹⁹

The bishops indeed exercised their influence on the Catholic press when it suited them. For instance, while in negotiations with the government about denominational schools, the bishops of England and Wales agreed at their annual general meeting to advise the Catholic press not to permit any correspondence on the education question.¹⁰⁰ In this case, the hierarchy could not have reacted through the official institutional procedures of ecclesiastical censure, but there were other paths open, which were indeed used when deemed necessary to safeguard Catholic interests.

2.2 Germany

Catholic newspapers were mainly founded during the *Kulturkampf* in the last third of the nineteenth century, often under the clergy's leadership. They were amateurish but enthusiastic endeavours. The Catholic media experienced its apotheosis during the *Kulturkampf* and became an indispensable part of the Catholic milieu as it sought closer links to the Centre party under the aegis of the *Augustinus Verein zur Pflege der katholischen Presse* (founded in 1878). This association aimed to improve and streamline Catholic press products. In 1931 the *Augustiner Verein* counted 575

⁹⁸ For examples see the files on *The Tablet* and *The City of London* in AAW, Bo 1 / 36; Bo 1 / 128.

⁹⁹ Letter Collings to de Val, 15.11.1938, with respect to the case of Noyes' 'Voltaire'. AAW, Hi 2.

¹⁰⁰ Minutes Bishops' meeting, 2.5.1935. AAW, Acta. Bishops 1930, V.

Catholic newspapers, of which 434 declared their sympathies with one of the Catholic parties. Catholic newspapers were never, however, in legal terms party newspapers, but independent both in their organisation and funding.¹⁰¹ They owed their survival to the efforts and donations of Catholic associations and personalities. The newspapers had a distinctly regional character with low circulations (mostly between 5,000-10,000 and rarely more than 20,000).¹⁰² Only four newspapers gained some national importance: *Germania* in Berlin, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, the *Augsburger Postzeitung* and the *Rhein-Mainische Volkszeitung*. The bulk of Catholic newspapers, however, were hardly read outside their target group because they were designed to express a particular worldview (*Gesinnungspresse*).¹⁰³ Like other examples of their kind this press had a twofold function: internally to create a homogenous community by repetition of common political and moral values, thus shaping opinion on current affairs; and externally to represent Catholic opinion to the outside world. In Weimar Germany, these functions presented the press with three specific tasks: first, a journalistic defence against anti-Catholic agitation; second, a further pulpit for the Church to fulfil her apostolate; and third, a propaganda and information tool for Catholic parties and associations. The Catholic press came highly recommended by the hierarchy. It was every Catholic family's moral duty to subscribe to at least one publication.¹⁰⁴

At the beginning of the twentieth century German Catholics could choose from a myriad of Catholic publications in addition to the daily and weekly newspapers of political Catholicism. In their variety they could cater for almost any taste, age, gender or class. Folk calendars, magazines (e.g., *St. Konradskalender*; *Der Feuerreiter*; *Deutsche Hausschatz*), Sunday papers for the family (e.g., *Stadt Gottes*) and diocesan news bulletins aimed to educate the rural Catholic population.¹⁰⁵ Almost all of the professions were organised in associations and each published its

¹⁰¹ Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 21.

¹⁰² Due to their size and financial limits Catholic newspapers only employed a small number of correspondents and mostly published articles supplied by press agencies. The editors were mostly left unmentioned. Ibidem, p. 21.

¹⁰³ The term *Gesinnungspresse* describes the press of any ideological movement and includes communist and social democrat papers. On a brief history of the German Catholic press see Roegele: 'Presse und Publizistik', pp. 395-434. Michael Schmolke: *Die schlechte Presse. Katholiken und Publizistik zwischen 'Katholik' und 'Publik' 1821-1968*, Münster, 1971.

¹⁰⁴ Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ Altermatt: *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus*, pp. 273-301.

own journal, be it for students, academics, civil servants, craftsman, farmers or workers. The educated Catholic middle class, lay and clergy, read the renowned academic periodicals like the Jesuits' *Stimmen der Zeit*; *Historisch-Politischen Blätter* (from 1924 continued as *Gelben Hefte*), *Historisches Jahrbuch* by the *Görresgesellschaft*, or Carl Muth's *Hochland*. Besides articles on theology, history or literature, these periodicals were also the discursive arena for Catholic scholars to discuss current societal trends.

Like other publishing houses, Catholic publications struggled to stay in print during the inflation and economic crisis of the Weimar Republic and some household names, such as *Katholik* and *Historisch-Politischen Blätter* did not survive. Historians have detected a change in the discourse of Catholic publications in the Weimar period. Before the war their emphasis was clearly on Catholic defence and spiritual re-newal. During the Republic, Catholics began to reflect on their own relationship to state and fatherland and their publications adopted the language of the prevailing nationalist zeitgeist. National-conservative Catholic authors declared their *Deutschtum*, called for a return to 'völkisch roots', and at times vilified Jews.¹⁰⁶ Under National Socialist rule, Catholic media were expected either to adopt the party political line or to seek the protection of the bishops and publish henceforth under the title 'Official Diocesan Bulletin' (*Amtliches Diözesanblatt*). These publications were protected by the Concordat, signed in 1933 with the Vatican, but had to make sure that they avoided conflict with the government.¹⁰⁷

The 'Jewish question' in German Catholic publications has provoked lively interest among historians. Five works are important for the Weimar period: Hermann Greive's and Wolfgang Altmann's analysis of academic and theological journals, Klaus Gotto's work on the Catholic youth journal *Michael / Junge Front*, Walter Hannot's exhaustive analysis of Catholic newspapers and Detlef Weiss' article on the *Historisch-Politischen Blätter / Gelben Hefte*.¹⁰⁸ Greive and Hannot are

¹⁰⁶ On the Centre's emphasis on 'national gathering' since November 1931 see Rudolf Morsey: 'Die deutsche Zentrumspartei', in: *Das Ende der Parteien*, ed. by Rudolf Morsey; Erich Matthias, Düsseldorf, 1960, pp. 281-453, (p. 301). On antisemitism see Thieme: 'Deutsche Katholiken', p. 280.

¹⁰⁷ Roegele: 'Presse und Publizistik', pp. 424-26.

¹⁰⁸ Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, Heidelberg, 1969. Klaus Gotto: *Die Wochenzeitung Junge Front / Michael. Eine Studie zum katholischen Selbstverständnis und zum Verhalten der jungen Kirche gegenüber dem Nationalsozialismus*, Mainz, 1970. Dieter Weiss: 'Katholischer Konservatismus am

diametrically opposed in their judgement on Catholic antisemitism, reflecting the general controversy surrounding the topic. Hermann Greive examined the academic and theoretical discourse among Catholic theologians and sociologists on the 'Jewish question', race theory and National Socialism.¹⁰⁹ He concluded that Catholic antisemitism undeniably had mobilising potential. It was aimed at the alleged extensive influence of the Jews which was said to have grown in the liberal economic system and modern society of Weimar. Catholic resentment, Greive argues, was essentially turned against democracy and the socialist movement. His research also confirmed that the 'Jewish question' was not the core issue of Catholics. However, the overwhelmingly negative image of the Jews in Catholic writing led Greive to assume that the at times marginal importance of the 'Jewish question' was not a sign of sympathy towards the Jews. It was rather a behaviour guided by age-old prejudices.¹¹⁰ Wolfgang Altmann, too, found considerable evidence of hostility towards Jews in Catholic academic periodicals and journals of the Weimar Republic. Contrasting this media with the absence of antisemitism in Catholic working class media, he saw the roots for this antisemitism in the authors' conservative attitude of the petit bourgeois, not necessarily in the parameters of a Catholic religious world.¹¹¹ More recently, Walter Hannot examined the discussion of the 'Jewish question' in Catholic newspapers close to the Centre Party and Bavarian People's Party. He was thereby closing the gap between the academic discourse (covered in both Greive's and Altmann's research) and that of the popular press.¹¹² With regard to a 'Jewish question' and antisemitism, he insisted that they

Scheideweg – Die "Historisch-politischen Blätter" und die "Gelben Hefte", in: *Konservative Zeitschriften zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur. Fünf Fallstudien*, ed. by Hans-Christof Kraus, Berlin, 2003, pp. 97-115. Thanks go to Dieter Weiss for a copy of his article and information on further literature.

¹⁰⁹ Although academic periodicals have always had a limited readership, Greive insisted that Catholic academic periodicals significantly contributed to the popular dissemination of antisemitic prejudices. Information published in these journals was eventually fed back to 'ordinary' Catholics through the channels of the lower clergy (*Seelsorgklerus*) and newspapers. According to Greive, periodicals also present a more continuous Catholic thought that was less directly affected by politics and current affairs. Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, pp. 11-13.

¹¹⁰ Ibidem, pp. 222-26.

¹¹¹ Wolfgang Altmann: *Die Judenfrage in evangelischen und katholischen Zeitschriften zwischen 1918 und 1933*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Munich, 1971, p. 420.

¹¹² Hannot includes Bavarian papers with close links to the BVP, Rhenish newspapers that reflect the opinion of liberal Catholicism, smaller newspapers of the *Eifel* region with their large impoverished Catholic rural population, the *Germania* for Berlin with its 10% Catholics and Westphalian newspapers with a conservative nationalist attitude. His analysis profits from a differentiation between 'diaspora' publications in regions with a very small Catholic population such as Berlin or Nuremberg and those who essentially portrayed mainstream Catholic culture, as publications in

were not a central issue in the newspapers he examined. Anti-Jewish attitudes manifested themselves more in random remarks than in extensive and systematic analytical articles. According to Hannot, antisemitism was not used to mobilise the Catholic population against Weimar democracy. Instead, the newspapers followed the policy of tolerance towards the Jews advocated by the Catholic parties, while at the same time emphasising the differences between Catholics and Jews. Antisemitism in German society was likewise tolerated, as long as it was not violent or racist. Hannot also looks into the reports on National Socialism, its racism and race theory in general and rejects Greive's assumption that Catholicism and National Socialism had some ideological commonalities which eventually led to a gradual rapprochement with National Socialism. On the contrary, Hannot argued, the Catholic newspapers (like the Catholic parties) had always warned against National Socialist racism and its exulted ideology and continuously reminded Catholics that their Christian values were not compatible with those of National Socialism. Catholic antisemitism was, in Hannot's view, not just determined by a Catholic worldview but depended substantially on different local political circumstances and the diversity of Catholic milieus in Germany.¹¹³

The problem of Greive and Hannot is that they discuss one of many Catholic milieus in Germany as representative of German Catholicism. This necessarily results in disagreement. Greive's subjects were influential, conservative Catholic intellectuals and clerics, many of whom later sympathised with the *Rechtskatholiken*. He wrote little on the traditionally liberal and democratic left-wing of the Centre Party. Nevertheless, Greive's book was long overdue to balance the many historical studies that concentrated exclusively on the Centre's liberalism and tolerance. Hannot, on the other hand, continues this historiography with his focus on those newspapers that were close to the two Catholic parties and with hardly any reference to the Catholic political right. This is to some extent justifiable, since more than 75% of Catholic newspapers were close to either the Centre Party or the BVP in 1931.¹¹⁴ As such these newspapers were important opinion brokers for political Catholicism and essential to any quest into Catholic public opinion. In his summary, however, Hannot

Bavaria did. Though Hannot differentiates convincingly between Reich, Austrian and 'lost territory' (Upper Silesia, Saarland) newspapers, the regional differences of the Reich newspapers were unfortunately lost in his final summary. Hannot: *Judenfrage*, Mainz, 1990.

¹¹³ Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 104, pp. 145-47.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 16.

makes too much of the Centre's tolerance towards Jews, despite the frequent and hostile cultural antisemitism he has unearthed in his analysis. The chosen timeframe that only begins in 1924 with the quiet years of Weimar Germany, as well as some of Hannot's definitions, clearly favoured his positive conclusion. For example, in order to portray the newspapers' attitude to racism, Hannot concentrates on Catholic comments on National Socialist racism, rather than on racist comments in general. Thus, potential parallels between *völkisch* rhetoric and the ideas espoused in Catholic newspapers receive far too little attention.

Some of these points have been addressed in single studies on further Catholic publications. Klaus Gotto's study on the periodical of the Catholic youth movement, *Junge Front* is, for instance, an illustration of how pervasive cultural antisemitism and the rhetoric of 'national gathering' (*nationale Sammlung*) was in Weimar society, including the Catholic youth.¹¹⁵ The *Junge Front* was previously considered by Konrad Repgen to be more representative of German Catholicism and its attitude towards Jews than the *Schönere Zukunft* and its racial antisemitism.¹¹⁶ The Catholic conservative right and their periodical the *Gelben Hefte* have also come under closer scrutiny. These studies, confirm the right's affinities to National Socialism and the adaptation of racial antisemitism in their publications.¹¹⁷

So far, researchers agree on the existence of religious anti-Judaism and a socio-cultural antisemitism among Catholics. Although it has been gradually accepted that race theory was also picked up by Catholics, most historians confirm that National Socialist racial antisemitism found no positive response in this community.¹¹⁸ As such, it is agreed, Catholic antisemitism was not determined by a specific Catholic worldview, but by general social and political influences. Disagreement arises over the extent to which these prejudices were extended within Catholic society and the extent to which antisemitism was able to mobilise the community in favour of the

¹¹⁵ Gotto: *Junge Front*, pp.12-21.

¹¹⁶ Konrad Repgen: 'German Catholicism and the Jews: 1933-1945', in: *Judaism and Christianity under the Impact of National Socialism*, ed. by Otto Dov Kulka; Paul Mendes Flohr, Jerusalem, 1987, pp. 197-226, (pp. 216-17).

¹¹⁷ See, e.g., Weiss: 'Katholischer Konservatismus', p. 113.

¹¹⁸ This result was to some extent pre-determined by the methodology used. Hannot, e.g. records only articles that discussed race science and National Socialist racism, but not racial prejudices that were targeted at Jews in a different context than race science. Similarly, his result that Catholic newspapers rejected antisemitism is probably largely determined by the contemporary definition of antisemitism as National Socialist Jew-hatred and does not necessarily include prejudices against Jews which we today regard as virulently antisemitic (i.e. 'Jewish' dominance and conspiracy).

völkisch right and National Socialism.¹¹⁹ The reason for this must be seen in the (often necessary) compartmentalisation of historical research, where the interconnectivity between ideology and society, and between society, different communities and the individual is all too often lost. Much could be gained if, for instance, Greive's history of ideas of Catholic intellectuals were combined with a study of their social and political influence in Weimar society. Newspaper analysis following Hannot's work could look for both the similarities and differences of Catholic discourse to National Socialist thought and propaganda.

The following newspaper analysis partly is based on existing empirical research, with some amendments that seek to draw more attention to the similarities between völkisch and Catholic discourse within and outside political Catholicism. Firstly, the emphasis should not be primarily on responses to National Socialist racial antisemitism. Literature on Catholic antisemitism has at times underestimated the importance of cultural and economic prejudices against Jews. Of these, anti-communism and the stereotype of the Jewish-Bolshevik were a common passion of Weimar Germany's centre-right parties and was probably one of the more compelling motives that could attract Catholics to Hitler's movement.¹²⁰ It is assumed here that these prejudices ostracised the Jews in Weimar Germany with the result that Hitler's later antisemitic propaganda did not necessarily seem outlandish.

¹¹⁹ Heinrich Winkler: 'Die deutsche Gesellschaft der Weimarer Republik und der Antisemitismus – Juden als "Blitzableiter"', in: *Vorurteil und Völkermord*, pp. 341-65, (p. 341). For a good example of opposing views see Hermann Greive: 'Between Christian Anti-Judiasm and National Socialist Antisemitism: The Case of German Catholicism', in: *Judaism and Christianity*, pp. 169-79; Rudolf Lill: 'German Catholicism's Attitude towards the Jews in the Weimar Republic', in: *Judaism and Christianity*, pp. 151-68. For the relation between Catholicism and National Socialism Junker and Kertzer argued for important commonalities between the two, as did Goldhagen lately (rather polemically) and Conway. Detlef Junker: *Die deutsche Zentrumspartei und Hitler, 1932/33. Ein Beitrag zur Problematik des politischen Katholizismus in Deutschland*, Stuttgart, 1969. Kertzer: *Unholy War*, pp. 264-93. Daniel J Goldhagen: *A Moral Reckoning. The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*, New York, 2002. Konrad Repgen interprets National Socialism and the Catholic Church as 'competing value systems'. Repgen: 'German Catholicism and the Jews', p. 203. The latest and quite balanced account on the Vatican and National Socialism has been provided by Michael Phayer: *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust*, Bloomington, 2000.

¹²⁰ A prominent example is Franz von Papen who (in his statement before the Nuremberg Court) admitted that he thought the NSDAP was the lesser evil to Bolshevism. Richard Overy: *Interrogations. The Nazi Elite in Allied Hands 1945*, Harmondsworth, 2001, p. 435. Also the negotiations between the Centre Party and the NSDAP as sign of the Centre's orientation to the right. Karl Dietrich Bracher: *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik*, 4th edn, Villingen, 1964, p. 622. Detlef Junker is more cautious, suggesting that the Centre wanted to put von Papen under political pressure. The Centre's negotiations with the NSDAP signified its commitment to democratic principles. Junker: *Die deutsche Zentrumspartei*, p. 19.

This convergence in prejudices also explains the mute reaction to the regime's early antisemitic measures.

Another amendment occurred in the choice of sources. Literature has often placed considerable emphasis on the importance of the *Germania* and the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, the Centre Party's flagship papers, and their tolerance towards Jews. During the Weimar period, however, both papers lost support among Catholic readers who were instead buying their local Catholic paper.¹²¹ I have consequently focused on regional papers in order to add to the existing analysis of the Catholic press in Germany.¹²² These include the *Märkische Volkszeitung*, a very popular Berlin paper with a circulation that surpassed that of the *Germania*,¹²³ the *Sonntagszeitung* and *Thüringer Volkswacht* in Erfurt which represent Catholic 'diaspora' regions, while Passau's *Donauzeitung*, comes from a region where Catholicism was a majority culture. *Der Arbeiter* spoke for organised Catholic workers in south Germany.¹²⁴ The Catholic working class has so far been largely exempted from the charge of antisemitism, but there has been little systematic work on working-class media.¹²⁵ The non-Centre, right-wing section of the Catholic milieu is represented by the *Gelben Hefte*, successor to the *Historisch-Politischen*

¹²¹ Dr Hohn of the Berlin Centre Party feared that the two papers would lose any influence on public opinion if the dismal situation of the Centre press were not changed soon. Diocesan papers and Sunday family papers were said to cannibalise the political Catholic press, as the family could not afford to subscribe to a daily paper in addition to the former. In 1927, subscriptions to the *Germania* amounted to 6,000, that of the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* to 16,000. Letter Dr Hohn to Caspar Gierse, 7.8.1927. BA, R8115I / 184.

¹²² Most research on the Catholic press is limited to those papers that were very close to the parties' policies. Newspapers further to the right, yet still Catholic and accepted as such, are largely ignored. There should be future research on papers such as the *Allgemeine Rundschau*, or the *Süddeutschen Monatshefte*, which aimed at the 'Catholic intelligence' with conservative-right values and *völkisch* vocabulary.

¹²³ The *Germania* was eventually merged with the *Märkische Volkszeitung* on 31.12.1938. The circulation of the *Volkszeitung* ranged between 22,000 to 28,000. Its chief editor was in 1923 Josef Ritter, from 1930 and throughout the Third Reich Dr Lorenz Zach. *Sperlings Zeitschriften-Adressbuch*, ed. by Börsenverein der Deutschen Buchhändler, 50th edn, Leipzig, 1929. Ibidem: 61st edn, Leipzig, 1939. *Jahrbuch der Tagespresse. Deutsches Institute für Zeitungskunde*, 3 vols, Berlin (1928-30), Carl Duncker Verlag, III.

¹²⁴ *Der Arbeiter* was the organ of the Catholic Workers' Association of Southern Germany published between 1889 and 1934 with a circulation of 40,000 copies in 1925. Most of its articles on current affairs were written by the chief editor or the Association's president. Further contributions were written by representatives of the Christian Unions (Wilhelm Bosbach) or the West German workers' movement (Josef Joos, Otto Müller, Anton Retzbach, Josef Andre). It was briefly banned in March 1933. It merged with the journal *Ketteler-Feuer. Katholische Wochenschrift für das schaffende Volk in Stadt und Land* in 1935. Under National Socialist pressure the journal solely published religious, moral issues from then on. Dorit-Maria Krenn: *Christliche Arbeiterbewegung in Bayern vom Ersten Weltkrieg bis 1933*, Mainz, 1991, p. 120, p. 599. Dorit-Maria Krenn; Rudolf Letschert: *Solidarität. 100 Jahre Katholische Arbeitnehmerbewegung Süddeutschlands*, München, 1991, p. 11.

¹²⁵ The *Westdeutsche Arbeiter Zeitung* was the other larger newspaper of the West German Catholic Workers' Association and rarely promoted antisemitism.

Blätter and close to the conservative right around Martin Spahn. The journal was edited by Max Buchner, leader of the DNVP Catholics in Bavaria and history professor first at the University of Würzburg, then Munich.¹²⁶ Like most publications of the *Rechtskatholiken* the journal accused political Catholicism of being a traitor to Catholic ideals in its co-operation with 'socialists and Jews', claiming that the Centre and the BVP could therefore no longer claim a monopoly on the representation of Catholic political opinion in the Republic.¹²⁷ The *Gelben Hefte* was funded by members of the Catholic aristocracy, including Konstantin und Maria von Gebsattel – the retired Bavarian General was the vice-president of the *völkisch* Pan-German League from 1914¹²⁸ – but also from Catholic politicians including Heinrich Held, a BVP member of the Bavarian Landtag and Prime Minister of Bavaria from 1924 to 1933.¹²⁹

2.2.1 The 'Jewish Question' and its 'Solution'

The discourse in Catholic newspapers on Jews and antisemitism was modern in its borrowing from the terminology of race science and in its use of antisemitic stereotypes, including that of 'Jewish Bolshevism'. Catholic newspapers would only occasionally refer to a theological context in their discussion of the 'Jewish question'. This stands in contrast to Catholic newspapers in England, where the

¹²⁶ As one of its supporters, Paul Lejeune-Jung, had suggested in his letter of 26.5.1924, most members of the *Hefte*'s board were nationalist anti-democrats. BAK, Nachlass Buchner N1088, 18.

¹²⁷ The *Gelben Hefte* (GH) were published in seventeen volumes from 1924 to 1941. Weiss: *Katholischer Konservatismus*, pp. 108-109. On the DNVP, Buchner and their attacks on the Centre Party see Peter Herde: 'Max Buchner (1881-1941) und die politische Stellung der Geschichtswissenschaft an der Universität Würzburg 1925-1945', in: *Die Universität Würzburg in den Krisen der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Biographisch-systematische Studien zu ihrer Geschichte zwischen dem Ersten Weltkrieg und dem Neubeginn 1945*, ed. by Peter Baumgart, Würzburg, 2002, pp. 183-251, (pp. 194-95). Herde cites in this respect Buchner in GH, 4 (1927-28), pp. 950-51; GH, 6 (1930), p. 483. The role of the *Gelben Hefte* in the *Rechtskatholiken*'s aims is discussed in Chapter Three.

¹²⁸ Gebsattel was a convinced follower of the *völkisch* race ideology and dreamed of the creation of a greater German Reich. Berding: *Moderner Antisemitismus*, p. 174.

¹²⁹ The founding capital was provided by Freiherr Fritz von Schell, Graf Felix von Loë, Graf Josef zu Stolberg-Stolberg, Freiherr von Lüninck, Baron Moreau. In their role as creditors, these nobles participated in the initial negotiation for the foundation of the *Gelben Hefte* (3.6.1924), where Max Buchner was elected as chief editor. BAK, N1088, 68. In the following years other nobles such as Mallinckrodt or the DNVP member of the Reichstag Paul Lejeune-Jung supported the *Hefte* financially. Letter Buchner to Mallinckrodt 6.6.1927. BAK, N1088, 19. Letter Lejeune-Jung to Buchner, 26.5.1924. BAK, N1088, 18. Adelgunde von Hohenzollern to Buchner, 27.6.1927. BAK, N1088, 12.

religious dimensions of Christian-Jewish relations was a regular component in such discussions. Articles usually distinguished between the biblical 'Chosen People', 'post-biblical' Judaism and the 'irreligious' Jews. The latter were mostly perceived as personification of modern irreligion and materialism, whereas the biblical Jews were valued as part of the Christian heritage. In the case of English newspapers, biblical references were meant to offer an explanation for modern Jewry's alleged antagonism towards Christians. German Catholic newspapers conjured a similar link between biblical and modern times where references to the deeds and misdeeds of biblical Jews often served to explain the modern world and admonish readers to act according to Catholic values. For instance, when *Der Arbeiter* recounted the story of the golden calf and Moses' fury about Jews paying reverence to the golden statue, it was not just to remind readers of the scripture, but to refer to the modern world. It ended thus:

This fury is as social fury every man's pride (*eine echte Männerzier*), if he challenges what the Messiah had once called so fittingly the 'mammon of injustice', [namely] [...] atheistic capitalism. This atheistic capitalism has indeed been the deepest cause of world war and world revolution.¹³⁰

Much more common than religious references to Jews were complaints about their alleged negative influence in the contemporary secular world. The publications of political Catholicism examined here contain elements of antisemitism that could range from passing remarks to hateful polemic. The first extensive article of *Der Arbeiter* on the 'Jewish question' in December 1918 is a representative example of the popular discussion in German Catholic newspapers. The article acknowledged that Jews had gained preferential positions in public life as a result of their emancipation, their diligence and 'other, less flattering characteristics'. It was also to the Jews' advantage that 'the Jewish financier Bleichröder' had arranged measures to stop Stöcker's 'good work'. This led the author to explain at length the Jews' role in capitalist society. 'The Jews are the fathers of modern capitalism' and 'mammonism', which he then underpins with Werner Sombart's statistics, who had spent considerable energy on proving the Jews' alleged economic dominance with the means of modern science.¹³¹ In politics, the author had no doubts that Jews

¹³⁰ 'Der Manneszorn', *Der Arbeiter*, 22.5.1919, p. 4.

¹³¹ On the perpetuation of incorrect statistics, including Sombart's, that imply a Jewish dominance over German economy see Stefan Rohrbacher: 'Über das Fortwuchern von Stereotypvorstellungen in

supported the 'social-democratic-revolutionary movement' and were 'at the front of all revolutions'. Moreover, they presided in European governments, even though they were aliens (*landfremd*). After linking the Jews with modern capitalism, social democracy and revolutions the author asked his readers to accept the principle of religious freedom – but:

One still has to fight emphatically the usurious spirit of the profit-Jews (*Nurgeschäftsjuden*), the decomposing work of a certain Jewish literature (*jüdisches Literatentum*), the international fraternization- and revolution-Jews; even German-nationalist and righteous Jews do not object to this.¹³²

In many Catholic newspapers authors did not stop short of a general identification of modern capitalism with Jewry and used antisemitism to criticise the excesses of this system. In a summary of Dr Sonnenschein's public talk on 'The European Present and Young Catholicism' the *Märkische Volkszeitung* agreed with Sonnenschein's juxtaposition of a responsible 'Catholic universalism' to 'proletarian socialism, freemasonry and Jewish capitalism'.¹³³

While economic antisemitism was common to Catholic newspapers in England and German, cultural antisemitism was considerably more prevalent in German newspapers. The repertoire of cultural antisemitism targeted the excesses of the modern world and found its expression in a critique of materialism, immorality, excessive capitalism ('mammonism') and a general loss of culture. Literature and culture were generally criticised for their lack of Christian values and morals, but references to 'race' and 'Jewish' character ('Russian of Jewish blood'; 'Jewish

der Geschichtswissenschaft', in: *Shylock? Zinsverbot und Geldverleih in jüdischen und christlichen Traditionen*, ed. by Johannes Heil, Bernd Wacker, München, 1997, pp. 235-53. Paul Mendes Flohr: 'Werner Sombart's The Jews and Modern Capitalism. An Analysis of its Ideological Premises', *LBIYB*, 21 (1976), 87-107.

¹³² 'Zur Judenfrage', *Der Arbeiter*, 19.12.1918. 'Die Arbeiterschaft als Schutztruppe des Großkapitals', *Der Arbeiter*, 2.8.1919, p. 3: 'But let's not ignore that the majority of the social democratic leaders, agitators, journalists (*Zeitungsschreiber*) are closely linked with capital (*Grosskapital*) by blood, race and faith. ... almost without fail Jews. ...'

¹³³ Dr Carl Sonnenschein spoke in his capacity as head of the *Sekretariat sozialer Studentenarbeit* in front of a committee of Catholic academics on 12.7.1920. Printed in *Märkische Volkszeitung*, 22.7.1920, p. 11. After his doctorate in theology and philosophy Sonnenschein (1876-1924) worked as a priest in Aachen and as a publicist for the *Volksverein*. He was politically active in the Berlin Centre Party and stood as its representative for the May 1928 Reichstag election. Sonnenschein is seen as defender of the Republic and supporter of inter-denominational Christian workers' unions. *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie*, ed. by Walther Killy; Rudolf Vierhaus, 12 vols, Munich, 1995-2000, IX (1998), p. 374.

spirituality')¹³⁴ again singled out the Jews more than any other group as promoters of un-Christian culture.¹³⁵ A good example of cultural antisemitism in a Centre Party paper is an article on Moses Mendelssohn, the eighteenth century intellectual. Mendelssohn, it was claimed, symbolised the 'problem' caused by Jewish activities in German literature:

[R]ace and faith mark his fate and his background. There are however many special shapes (*Sonderprägungen*): the more absolute Jews and those who are bound to a place and a time; the religious and the dissidents who are no longer touched in their lives (*Lebensordnung*) by the spirit of Judaism. Only those turn into literature-Jews filled with negative forces: the restless chaotic, decomposing, the cynical ironic. [...] Despite all this, the German Jew is since Moses Mendelssohn part of German cultural heritage. However – this remains often overlooked – not to the same extent.¹³⁶

However, the most durable anti-Jewish theme in most Catholic papers – in England and Germany – was anti-Bolshevism. Ever since the end of the war and particularly the revolutions of 1918/19, the alleged link between Jews and socialist or Bolshevik movements evolved into a constant and deep anxiety. It stood at the centre of the 'Jewish question'.

In July 1919 the *Märkische Volkszeitung* printed an extensive article on the 'Jewish problem'. It stated that the problem lay in the fact that 'mainly semites create and support' Bolshevism, a fact 'verified' by Bela Kun in Hungary and Jewish communists in Germany. While searching for a reason for this sympathy the article ran through popular arguments, such as the Jews profitable involvement in any revolution in history, their religion, their race or their experience of the ghetto. The article warned the Jews that their 'aggression' would ultimately generate a hostile reaction:

We simply want to draw attention to the consequences that will, yes have to, follow the usual course of history, once the world will have been cured from Bolshevism. [...] One can only advise the Jews to turn their backs on the Spartakists in time. Then [...] one does not have to fear persecution of the Jews and pogroms. But if this continues in the same fashion, no one will be able to prevent what has to come.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ The author, Wilhelm Schulte, meant that they only represented 'city culture' – a culture deeply deplored by conservative Catholic thinkers. Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 206.

¹³⁵ Hannot differs from this view by emphasising that un-Christian culture was criticised regardless whether it was produced by Jews or not. Still, it remains unclear why authors thought it was necessary to use the adjective 'Jewish'. Ibidem, p. 208.

¹³⁶ Cited in ibidem, p. 203.

¹³⁷ 'Das Judenproblem', *Märkische Volkszeitung*, 2.7.1919, p. 3.

At that time the feeling that Jews led socialist unrest in post-war Germany was widely shared. Even the otherwise moderate *Kölner Volkszeitung* (it is known for its non-antisemitic attitude), felt uncomfortable with Kurt Eisner's reign in Munich and agreed with the *Münchener Nachrichten* that no 'Galician Jew' could rule in Christian Bavaria.¹³⁸

The Catholic Church at the time and Catholic historians since have asserted that conversion to Catholicism has been the Catholic solution to a 'Jewish question'. This principle should not gloss over the other avenues Catholics explored. Indeed, if 'solutions' were suggested conversion did not play the central role. Many authors doubted either its effectiveness in altering a 'Jewish character' or the effectiveness of proselytising in the first place, because of the low success rates among Jews.¹³⁹ Palestine as a Jewish national home was occasionally also discussed as a 'solution' to the 'Jewish question'. Even though some authors worried that Palestine was too small to be a home to all Jews, it was seen as an acceptable way (in contrast to Catholic newspapers in England).¹⁴⁰ Yet the Catholic press rarely systematically thought through the details of the 'problem' and its possible 'solutions'. In most cases, newspaper articles referred to 'solutions' suggested by Catholic handbooks. Thus a colourful portrait of the 'Jewish problem' often ended with a request to Jews to 'restrain themselves' or to Catholics not to join an unjust (i.e. radical) antisemitism. The most widely proposed 'solution' was a vague appeal to return to a 'true Catholicism' that would solve the problems of modern society, including the 'corrosive' influence of the Jews.¹⁴¹

The periodical of the Catholic conservative right, the *Gelben Hefte*, shared the same antisemitic stereotypes with other Catholic newspapers where Jews usually represented the feared and hated communist, or the liberal who undermined German culture. But, like the *Witness* press in England, the *Gelben Hefte* consistently portrayed the 'Jewish question' as a race problem. In its hostility and radicalism it surpassed the antisemitism in the publications of political Catholicism. Contributors

¹³⁸ 'Fremdlinge in Bayern', *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 20.1.1919, p. 2.

¹³⁹ *Der Arbeiter*, 14.11.1922, p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ Hannot: *Judenfrage*, pp. 122-25.

¹⁴¹ See, e.g., *Der Arbeiter*, 27.11.1919, p. 3. For an example of a clear rejection of Jew-hatred see *Thüringer Volkswacht*, 8.7.1922, p. 10.

regularly adopted the terminology of race science and left no doubt that Jews belonged to a different race, determined by their blood.¹⁴² This racial antisemitism in the *Gelben Hefte* was thus *völkisch* in character with considerable similarities to National Socialism antisemitic propaganda.¹⁴³ These similarities extended to the ‘solution’ of the ‘Jewish question’. The *Gelben Hefte* presented the ‘Jewish question’ as an essential problem for the survival of the German nation. Contributors favoured discriminatory laws against Jews as a temporary ‘solution’, while the long-term ‘solution’ was the removal of Jews from the centres of German social, political and economic life. This stage, it was agreed, would automatically be achieved with the end of the democratic republic that favoured Jews over Germans. The return of the monarchy and a corporatist system, would assign the Jews their traditional place in a Christian state – on the periphery.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the main political aim of the *Rechtskatholiken*, the restoration of the German monarchy, also solved their ‘Jewish problem’.

The Catholic newspapers close to political Catholicism, on the other hand, consistently rejected racial antisemitism (which was in their eyes the Jew-hatred of the *völkisch* movement and the NSDAP) for its violence and even more so because it substituted faith with race. Yet Jews were generally considered as a particular group (*Sondergruppe*), defined by their historical, ethnic and religious *Volksart*, into which they were born and educated. The term ‘Jewish race’ ascribed to the Jews certain characteristics they had inherited throughout their history and were now inscribed in their ‘blood’. Race science was still in its infancy, and conflicting opinions existed about the extent to which human beings and whole peoples were shaped by their bloodline. Newspaper articles often reflected the ambiguity of this novel science. The article, ‘Legend of Pure Blood’, for example, refuted the notion that a *völkisch*

¹⁴² The fashionable topic race was – among others – discussed by G. Lehmacher, SJ, in 1926, where he endorsed the superiority of the nordic people. On race see *GH*, 3 (1926), p. 820. Also Gebtsattel’s article in *GH*, 1 (1924), p. 409; Josef Hengesbach in *GH*, 5 (1929), pp. 229-30; and *GH*, 4 (1927-28), p. 902. All cited in Herde: ‘Max Buchner’, pp. 196-97. Interestingly, despite the ‘modern’ references to race theory, the religious framework of the ‘Jewish question’ was not lost. It mostly served to underline the ‘natural’, and ‘eternal’ (therefore unchangeable), antagonism between Jewry and Christendom (and therewith Germany). Buchner in *GH*, 5 (1929), pp. 189-90; *GH*, 7 (1930-1), pp. 90-91. Cited in Herde: ‘Max Buchner’, p. 196. Herde has remarked that similar antisemitic attitudes were then quite common in Catholic and Vatican circles.

¹⁴³ Weiss: ‘Konservative Konservatismus’, p. 113. On the similarities of *völkisch* and National Socialist antisemitism see Uwe Lohalm: ‘Völkisch Origins of Early Nazism: Antisemitism in Culture and Politics’, in: *Hostages of Modernisation*, I, 174-95, (pp. 190-92).

¹⁴⁴ All cited in Herde: ‘Max Buchner’, p. 197.

or racial purity existed but asserted that the ruling European families had mainly sprung from the northern race. Only since the French Revolution had the Germanic people gradually lost their influence in history. The article continued:

Blood and racial blends increased closer to the present time. Since the beginning of the 18th century Russian and Jewish blood, that had not been present in earlier times, penetrates the west (*dringt überall [...] nach dem Westen*). [...] It would, however, be a mistake if one would conclude that the whole of Europe and even the noblest circles were an utter racial hotchpotch (*Blutsgemengsel*). [...] Jews are exceptions in the genealogy of the upper classes and even more so among the lower aristocracy and peasantry. The basic stock is formed by the common people (*Bodenständige*).¹⁴⁵

Catholic newspapers mostly relied on the work of Hermann Muckermann who often contributed to this discourse with his own articles on race science and eugenics. His work is the best guide to understanding the racism implied in Catholic newspapers. Muckermann had left the Society of Jesus in 1926 to concentrate on his research and work as director of eugenics at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology in Berlin.¹⁴⁶ He thought that each race had its specific physical and mental abilities, but often refrained from classifying superior and inferior races. However, he believed that the purity of a race determined its depths and quality, its characteristic, so that purity was ultimately superior to mixed races. For this reason Muckermann was against mixed marriages and the 'influx of alien races'. The influence of these races in German youth education, science and literature should remain limited. He also favoured sterilisation of alcoholics, criminals and the demented, which was unusual for a Catholic.¹⁴⁷ Apart from sterilisation, many of his ideas were taken up and perpetuated by other writers, including the glorification of the Nordic race.¹⁴⁸

'Race', as it was used and discussed in Catholic newspapers implied many factors that are usually attributed to *völkisch* racism: a suspicion of miscegenation, the

¹⁴⁵ 'Die Legende vom reinen Blut', *Märkische Volkszeitung*, 8.9.1932, p. 4.

¹⁴⁶ His work was recommended by Catholic newspapers and even church news bulletins (e.g., see the *Kirchenbote für Stadt und Bistum Osnabrück*, 29.8.1926; 15.2.1931). On Muckermann see Dagmar Grosch-Obenauer: *Hermann Muckermann und die Eugenik*, Mainz, 1996.

¹⁴⁷ Hermann Muckermann: *Rassenforschung und Volk der Zukunft. Ein Beitrag zur Einführung in die Frage vom biologischen Werden der Menschheit*, Berlin, 1928, pp. 37-41.

¹⁴⁸ For example: *Literarische Blätter der Kölnischen Volkszeitung*, 29.7.1926; *Danziger Landeszeitung*, 4.9.1929; *Hannoversche Volkszeitung*, 27.10.1928; *ibidem*, 21.6.1924; *Bamberger Volksblatt*, 27.3.1928; *Saarbrücker Landes-Zeitung*, 8.5.1933; Jews as *Fremdrassige* in *Danziger Landeszeitung*, 31.5.1933; and the definition of black people as the lowest race *Saarbrücker Landes-Zeitung*, 7.7.1933; *Bayerische Volkszeitung*, 24.2.1923; *ibidem*, 6.3.1924; *ibidem*, 11.4.1928. Quoted in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, pp. 231-33.

biological determination of physical and mental characteristics and its subsequent influence on the 'value' of a race, and in Muckermann's case even the support of negative eugenic measures.¹⁴⁹ These thoughts were axioms fundamental of racial hygienicists of the day, for instance, Ernst Haeckel, but also Francis Galton. Hitler, too, incorporated elements of these theories into his racial worldview.¹⁵⁰ It is therefore not correct to assume that racism and race science was unequivocally rejected in Catholic public discourse. What was rejected was the *völkisch* concept of the supremacy of race over the human soul and eventually over god.¹⁵¹

2.2.2 *Antisemitism over Time*

2.2.2.1 *The Bolshevik Threat, 1919-1923*

Catholics caught antisemitic fever in the years after the First World War just like the rest of the German population. From 1919 until well into 1924 articles on the Allies, the revolutions, profiteering or the communists often figured an unsympathetic and conniving Jew. Although most Catholic newspapers refrained from joining in the stab-in-the-back legend of the conservative right, their articles on the war and Versailles nevertheless alluded to a Jewish conspiracy against the national interest of Germany. For example, the organ of the South German Catholic Workers' Association made Karl Kautsky responsible for the ratification of the Versailles treaty, because 'no German and no German government could have signed a treaty containing such gruesome conditions.'¹⁵² As late as February 1924 the *Bayerische Volkszeitung* published a series titled 'Judah or Rome'. The author, one K. Nickel, was convinced that war and revolution had made the 'Jewish question' an urgent matter. He saw a decisive struggle at play between hatred of god – in the form of the godless, revolutionary Jews and their devilish power – and adoration of god.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Burleigh, Wippermann: *Racial State*, p. 38.

¹⁵⁰ Hitler believed in the relative worth of human races and was anxious to prevent miscegenation as this would weaken a race. Hitler's obsession with the purity of a race was, however, not shared by mainstream scientists. Some of his measures to achieve a healthy race were equally part of the contemporary eugenicist literature and included negative eugenic measures such as sterilisation of the sick and demented, and positive measures like improved social care – though this would only be available for Hitler's 'Aryans'. Ibidem, p. 38.

¹⁵¹ Muckermann: *Rassenforschung*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁵² *Der Arbeiter*, 20.9.1919, p. 3. In 1922 it found 'documentary proof' that Kurt Eisner was the very person who had drafted that despised treaty. *Der Arbeiter*, 16.5.1922, p. 4.

¹⁵³ Cited in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 109.

During the first years of the Republic, the fear of Bolshevism loomed large and with it the allegation that Jews in particular stood behind this revolutionary movement. Together with economic antisemitism, the Jewish-Bolshevik stereotype topped the chart of anti-Jewish remarks. The Bolshevik threat, according to the Catholic papers, was not contained in far-away Russia, but was closer to home in the form of the communist and social democrat parties in Germany. The Centre and BVP papers defamed the communist party, the SPD and the democratic parties as 'Jewish' particularly in the weeks shortly before national or regional elections, as did the *Sonntagszeitung* in Erfurt in January 1919:

It is a striking development that in this as in the Russian Revolution the Kerenski, Lenin, Trotzki, Litvinov, Kamenev, Joffe and many more, and generally the Jewish element played a decisive role. Part of the government in Berlin are: Haase, Hirsch, Rosenfeld, Bernstein, Simon, Cohn, Wurm and others; in Munich there are: Eisner, Jaffe and others; in Vienna [...] Deutsch, Bauer and others; in Prague: Stransky, etc. With its most radical representatives Jewry is ruling Christian peoples! This would have been inconceivable one hundred years ago. And today? One must not say how unnatural this development is that members of an alien people (*fremden Volksstammes*), that hardly account for 1,5% of German citizens, can virtually dominate the Germanic peoples.¹⁵⁴

This was not only a strategic use of antisemitism to gain more votes for the Christian parties, it had a clear anti-democratic stance where a republican state was denounced as a 'foreign' and 'Jewish' idea.¹⁵⁵ At the time, this rhetoric was employed by all newspapers examined, including that of the South Germany Catholic Workers' Association.¹⁵⁶ In the weeks before the January election in 1919 various Catholic newspapers, among them Berlin's *Märkische Volkszeitung* and Passau's *Donauzeitung*, declared that the Democratic Party was the party of the Jews and war profiteers. The *Donauzeitung* urged Catholic craftsmen not to vote for the democratic parties:

¹⁵⁴ 'Revolution and Re-construction', *Sonntagszeitung Erfurt*, 2.2.1919, p. 8. (similar 26.1.1919, p. 6.). The *Märkische Volkszeitung* in Berlin had the same anti-socialist and anti-democratic stance. Throughout 1919/20 it stressed the danger coming from the east, from Poland the Red Army. It reported on Bolshevik revolutions in Galicia, Poland; campaigned against socialists and Bolshevik (who always had Jewish names). At the same time the paper lauded the work of nationalist paramilitary groups that had saved the fatherland. The Weimar constitution on the other hand received only derogatory remarks because it was drafted by 'the Jew Preuß'. For examples see *Märkische Volkszeitung*, 26./27.3.1919, p. 3 / p. 5.

¹⁵⁵ *Der Arbeiter*, 31.10.1918, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ Krenn suggests that unlike the BVP and the Bavarian bishops, *Der Arbeiter* accepted the democratic and republican form of the constitution without reservations. However, considering the antisemitic mood at the time the label 'Jewish' could hardly have shone a positive light on democracy. Krenn: *Christliche Arbeiterbewegung*, pp. 232-34.

The Democratic Party is essentially an invention of the Jewish race. This party strives together with the Social Democrats for a majority in the national assembly. The Jewish element dominates in both parties' leadership. German craftsmanship has to reject a party that constantly flirts with social democracy. German craftsmanship has to prove if it can hang to its old ideals: Christian principles (*Gesinnung*), German character (*Eigenart*), German morals and truthfulness; while rejecting international cosmopolitan currents.¹⁵⁷

With the victory of the SPD and the democratic parties in the election the *Märkische Volkszeitung* then urged its readers to fight against democracy (*bürgerliche Demokratie*):

Our struggle is now foremost against the bourgeois democracy. It has gained 70 seats in the national assembly by gathering irreligious citizens in each constituency and pushed – although itself a tiny minority – one or two representatives forward. Here gather the same forces that incited the *Kulturkampf* in the 70s. United with the Social Democrats they will take up their old plans and prepare the way for freethinkers and an ideology without religion with 'legal means'.¹⁵⁸

The reference to the *Kulturkampf* stood for the anti-clerical policies of Adolf Hoffmann of the Independent Socialists (USPD) that had incensed church authorities and Christian voters alike. In the course of the November revolution in Berlin, Hoffmann was appointed to the Prussian Ministry for Cultural and Educational Affairs together with the Majority Socialist (MSPD) Konrad Haenisch. During his brief spell in the Ministry for Culture (from 12 November 1918 to early January 1919, six weeks in total), the notoriously anti-clerical Hoffmann abolished religious instruction as a regular subject in most Prussian schools and planned for the complete separation of state and church and therewith the elimination of state subsidies to the churches.¹⁵⁹ According to Klaus Scholder, this episode was enough to destroy the early prudent co-operation between the Social Democrats and the churches even in later years. Moreover, it contributed substantially to driving Christian voters into the arms of the right-wing parties.¹⁶⁰ Even more remarkable is

¹⁵⁷ 'Handwerk und demokratische Parteien', *Donauzeitung*, 4.1.1919, p. 6. Newspapers likewise urged Catholics not to vote DVP with the explanation that they were war-mongers and could not guarantee the rights of the Catholic Church and Catholic schools. Catholic papers, however, respected the DVP's Christian and nationalist way of thinking. E.g., 'Wahlbündnis', *Sonntagszeitung Erfurt*, 12.1.1919, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ *Märkische Volkszeitung*, 24.1.1919, p. 4. For the identification of Jews with the Democratic Party see the same paper on 17.1.1919 (two days before the election).

¹⁵⁹ Scholder: *Churches and the Third Reich*, I, 15-16.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

the rejection of democracy as such (and not just of one party, the USPD), as advocated in the *Märkische Volkszeitung*.

The two prominent antisemitic acts during the first four years of the Republic – the Rathenau murder and the unrest in Berlin's *Scheunenviertel* – met with a mixed reaction from Catholic journalists. Shock and disgust over Rathenau's murder filled their pages in 1922, followed by an unmistakable condemnation of violent antisemitism. Yet despite the disgust against murderous violence, the tenor implied all too often that Jews brought this hatred upon themselves. Even the lament about Rathenau's murder ended at times on an ambiguous note: 'some Jews have nurtured numerous enemies during the war and even more so during the revolutions'.¹⁶¹ The argument was very similar in the case of the *Scheunenviertel* riots, just a few days before the Hitler putsch in November 1923. In the course of these riots Jewish businesses were looted and a Berlin mob roamed the quarter assaulting those who to them looked Jewish. Many papers condemned the pogrom-like violence yet were unanimous in assigning responsibility to 'profiteering Eastern European' Jews.¹⁶²

The intensity of antisemitism in Catholic newspapers remained high until the failed Hitler putsch in 1923. It was a rude awakening to the possibility of a revolution from the extreme right and the Catholic press reacted accordingly, toned down their antisemitic agitation and condemned the Hitler movement – apart from the *Gelben Hefte* that just began to be published in 1924.

During the 'quiet' years of slow economic and political stabilisation between 1924 and 1928 antisemitic statements in Catholic publications declined noticeably.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ *Der Arbeiter*, 5.7.1922, p. 2, p. 7; 12.7.1922, p. 3.

¹⁶² See, e.g., the *Thüringer Volkswacht*, 7.11.1923, p. 5. According to Dirk Walter, the riots sparked off after local traders had offered a low exchange rate (Berlin's temporary currency [*Notgeld*] for Reichsmark) to people queuing in front of the employment exchange in Gormannstrasse. Rumours of this disturbance brought right-wing radicals to the scene who inflamed the violence further. Walter finds that the fact that some shops tried to protect themselves with signs reading 'Christian Trader' speaks for the antisemitic motivation of the looters. Walter: *Antisemitische Kriminalität*, pp. 152-53.

¹⁶³ According to Hannot, the reports on Jews did not exceed two references per week and numbered on average one mention per week, which was still four times as much as the average mention in English Catholic newspapers. Whereby the *Bayerische Volkszeitung* in Nuremberg and the *Oberschlesische Kurier* printed the most articles on Jews. Hannot gave to consideration that antisemitism might have been hidden in certain expressions and names that today would not cause concern. Out of methodological reasons he could not include these allusions in his analysis. One should, however, keep in mind that 'materialism', 'profiteering', 'liberalism', 'socialism' had been

According to Hannot, the quantity of antisemitic articles in Catholic newspapers markedly declined after 1924 and was around 25% lower in the years 1929-33 compared with 1923-28.¹⁶⁴ This does not mean that Germans in general were less 'Jew-conscious'. German-national, *völkisch* and increasingly National Socialist agitation kept the Jews in the public mind with allegations of sexual misconduct, ritual murder, and campaigns against Jewish ritual slaughter.¹⁶⁵ Unlike the national non-Catholic press, the papers of political Catholicism by and large rarely commented on these topics, apart from the comment that they were not in favour of Jews in general.¹⁶⁶ Only the financial scandal around Julius Barmat in 1925 enticed the *Der Arbeiter* into making anti-Jewish comments, emphasising that the interests of liberal capitalism and social democracy might serve the Jews but ran contrary to those of Catholic workers.¹⁶⁷ The right-wing press likewise exploited the involvement of the SPD in the Barmat and later in the Sklarek scandal in 1929 to 'prove' their thesis of a republican-social-democrat-Jewish conspiracy.¹⁶⁸

Catholic newspapers had their own issues in those years outside national politics that stimulated antisemitic remarks. These were profoundly linked with Catholic interests abroad and the fear of Bolshevism. German condemnation of religious persecution in Russia, Mexico and Spain was very similar to the reactions of the English Catholic press.

linked to Jewry for years (1919-23). This correlation was common language for too long for readers would not see it in 1925. Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 93.

¹⁶⁴ Based on table in ibidem, pp. 320-21 the sum of antisemitic remarks from 1923-28 was 72 compared to 51 in the following years up to 1933 (January-March). Hannot's quantitative analysis does not include articles that do not mention the word 'Jew/Jewish/antisemitism' but might have had a negative tendency in the eyes of contemporaries in a certain context.

¹⁶⁵ Walter: *Antisemitische Kriminalität*, p. 252.

¹⁶⁶ Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 138, p. 140.

¹⁶⁷ Throughout the year 1925 when the Barmat scandal came to light, *Der Arbeiter* published articles on 'usurious Eastern European Jews', on 'war profiteers' and the close co-operation of social democrats with Jewish financiers in the Barmat scandal. E.g., *Der Arbeiter*, 24.2.1925, p. 10; 7.2.1925, p. 10; 21.2.1925, p. 10; 28.2.1925, p. 4.

¹⁶⁸ The Barmat and, later in 1929, the Sklarek scandal did not only involve large scale financial fraud (the garment merchants Max, Leo and Willy Sklarek, e.g., cheated the town Berlin out of ten million marks), but also political favours and corruption of politicians across the political scale, including communists, social democrats, and German nationalists. According to Horst Möller, these scandals brought the Republic's democracy and rule of law in disrepute, although these reports were crossly exaggerated. Horst Möller: *Weimar. Die unvollendete Demokratie*, 6th edn, Munich, 1997, p. 176. For the political instrumentalisation of the scandals see Stephan Malinowski: 'Politische Skandale als Zerrspiegel der Demokratie. Die Fälle Barmat und Sklarek im Kakül der Weimarer Rechten', *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, 5 (1996), 46-65.

Mexico's case had become acute in the second half of 1920s. Priests, religious and Catholic lay people were murdered. Since 1924, the Mexican government under president Elias Calles systematically persecuted the Catholic Church. The simple presence of a priest became a capital offence, forcing the Church underground and its priests to travel the country in disguise, saying mass in barns and stables.¹⁶⁹ Many popular Catholic publications, including pamphlets by the respected Catholic publisher *Görreshaus*, reported that the Mexican president Elias Calles was a Jew.¹⁷⁰ The Centre Party's mouthpiece, the *Germania* in Berlin, on the other hand, printed Jewish rejoinders that denied the Jewish background of Calles.¹⁷¹ Still, it is worth noticing that it was Calles' name and not his revolution or his anti-clerical policy that first prompted the idea that 'Jewry' was somehow to blame. This reflex was particularly popular in Bavarian and Hanover newspapers, which accused the Jews of a conspiracy with freemasons against the Catholic Church in Mexico.¹⁷² Parallel to newspaper articles in English Catholic newspapers, the majority of Catholic newspapers deplored the fact that the non-Catholic press did not report on attacks on Catholics and argued that there was a 'conspiracy of silence' (the term was coined by Pius XI in his Christmas 1927 speech) by freemasons. They called on the 'Jewish press' to defend Catholic interests in the same way than Catholic papers had always deplored Jewish persecution.¹⁷³

2.2.2.2 *Antisemitism in the Face of National Socialism, 1923-1934*

Of the examined newspapers, the *Der Arbeiter* was the first to criticise National Socialism in February 1921. The young movement was described as anti-Christian,

¹⁶⁹ Cornwell: *Hitler's Pope*, p. 113.

¹⁷⁰ Cited in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 119.

¹⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 119.

¹⁷² The *Hannoversche Volkszeitung* described how Jews dominated this Catholic country's economy and politics. It moreover defined Jews as a separate race in so far that it was impossible to assimilate them to Mexico's Christian culture. 'Die Überjudung Mexikos', *Hannoversche Volkszeitung*, 3.4.1928; similar articles in *Bamberger Volksblatt*, 2.5.1924 by K. Rothmeier (BVP MP); *Bayerischer Kurier*, 1.5.1924; *Bayerische Volkszeitung*, 18.9.1925, all cited in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 120.

¹⁷³ As in *Dürener Zeitung*, 25.9.1928, cited in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 117. In the case of Spain, even the otherwise apolitical church newsbulletins linked the revolutionary events in 1931 with Russian Bolshevism. ('Der spanische Stiefel. Moskauer Bolschewismus vor Spaniens Toren', *Kirchenbote für Stadt und Bistum Osnabrück*, 7.6.1931, p. 178.) The folk calendar *St.Konradskalender* accused the 'Jewish press' to encourage Catholic persecution in Spain. *St.Konradskalender. Katholischer Volkskalender für die Erzdiözese Freiburg*, Karlsruhe, 1932, p. 94.

violent with dictatorial ambitions and uninterested in workers' needs.¹⁷⁴ Most other Catholic newspapers awoke to the radicalism of the movement only after Hitler's misfired coup in November 1923 and the antisemitic violence that foreshadowed and accompanied it.¹⁷⁵ Compared to the reaction to the *Scheunenviertel* riots, Catholic newspapers now generally expressed disapproval of violence against Jews more clearly, though they still only condemned this particular form of Jew-hatred, and not antisemitism as such.¹⁷⁶

Catholic double standards on the 'Jewish question' were displayed during the turmoil that arose around Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich-Freising, in November and December 1923. In a letter to the Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann (German Peoples' Party) and in his sermons, Faulhaber had condemned the nationalists' attacks on Christians and Jews and the violent antisemitism of *völkisch* groups in the days before Hitler's coup.¹⁷⁷ For these statements Faulhaber was then paraded as a protector of the Jews by the *völkisch* and nationalist press. The Central Committee of Munich Catholics (*Zentralkomitee der Münchner Katholiken*) stood up in defence of Cardinal Faulhaber and asserted that the Cardinal had only condemned the *völkisch* threat to kill every Jew indiscriminately.¹⁷⁸ The Committee refuted violent and undifferentiated antisemitism in a well-organised press campaign, but emphasised that they had no intention of protecting those Jews who were guilty of inciting revolution or of profiteering:

¹⁷⁴ Krenn: *Christliche Arbeiterbewegung*, p. 293.

¹⁷⁵ For criticism before the coup, see PH Pesch, SJ: 'Nationalismus und Christentum', *Sonntagszeitung Erfurt*, 27.5.1923, p. 3. Reaction to Hitler's coup see, e.g., 'Der 9. November in München', *Thüringer Volkswacht*, 13.11.1919, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ The author rejected the NSDAP's un-Christian and violent attitude but confirmed at the same time that 'we don't have any reason to defend the Jews'. 'Neue Tat-Menschen!', *Der Arbeiter*, 23.11.1922, p. 2. Similar: *Hannoversche Volkszeitung*, 18.1.1924, cited in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 103.

¹⁷⁷ The letter to Stresemann was thus cited in the *Donauzeitung*, 7.11.1923, p. 2: 'How can we reduce the hatred that is generally hurled at our Jewish co-citizens (*israelitischen Mitbürger*) and other groups in blind fury ... without any proven guilt.'

¹⁷⁸ Derek Hastings convincingly argued that the NSDAP enjoyed considerable Catholic support in its early days in Bavaria. This support evaporated after November 1923, because the NSDAP had adopted a hostile and violent anti-Catholic attitude under the influence of General Ludendorff that erupted after the failed Hitler putsch in November 1923. Faulhaber was accused of orchestrating a Jewish-Catholic conspiracy against this *völkisch* uprising. The Central Committee was formed by local engineer Johann Rauch to defend Cardinal Faulhaber and the Catholic Church against this violence and anti-Catholic vitriol of the *völkisch Kampfbund* movement. Derek Hastings: 'How Catholic was the Early Nazi Movement? Religion, Race and Culture in Munich, 1919-1924', *CEH*, 36 (2003), 383-433, (pp. 422-24).

Surely, he [Faulhaber] never wanted to excuse those acts through which Jewish revolutionaries and usurers had sinned against the German people and its wellbeing (*Volkswohl*).¹⁷⁹ [...] The Cardinal has never received anything for his sermon [...] from any Jew, neither for himself nor for the Church or charity.¹⁸⁰

The ambiguity of these statements was clear. The Catholic Church would not condone violence against innocent Jews, but it tolerated the widespread cultural antisemitism. Above all many of these statements perpetuated racial vocabulary and *völkisch* thinking, particularly in their defamation of Eastern European Jews, who were described as 'poison to our people's soul' and as 'dangerous parasites' (*Fremdkörper*) particularly when they did not respect the Christian and German nature of the state.¹⁸¹ Interestingly, the campaign of the Central Committee targeted Ludendorff's anti-Catholic influence in the *völkisch Kampfbund* but not Hitler's. Unlike Ludendorff who was accused of inciting another *Kulturkampf*, Cardinal Faulhaber saw in Hitler a man who aimed to rebuild the German *Volk* on the basis of its Christian Culture.¹⁸² Cardinal Faulhaber himself had continuously warned against racial antisemitism, but was at the same time convinced that Bolshevism was a Jewish movement. The battle against the alleged corrosive influence of the Jews was, in his view, a central aspect of the Catholic mission.¹⁸³

There have been numerous claims that political Catholicism was a true defender of Weimar democracy against the danger of National Socialism in the last three years of the Republic. The numerous reports on National Socialism in Catholic newspapers between 1930-33 are usually seen as sign of Catholic concern about that movement.¹⁸⁴ However, a qualitative analysis of these articles casts doubt on this idea of a Catholic bastion against National Socialism. After the high tide in 1924, discussion of the National Socialist movement began again in 1929/30, in essence

¹⁷⁹ *Bayerischer Kurier*, 7.11.1923, cited in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 105.

¹⁸⁰ 'Forderungen der Münchener Katholiken', *Bayerischer Kurier*, 12.12.1923, cited in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 105.

¹⁸¹ *Augsburger Postzeitung*, 7.11.1923; *Bayerische Volkszeitung*, 17.11.1923, cited in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 108.

¹⁸² Hastings: 'How Catholic', p. 425.

¹⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 413. Hastings refers to Faulhaber's speech at the 1922 *Katholikentag* in Munich where the Cardinal contrasted the negative influence of the 'Jewish press' with the nobility of 'Catholics of the racially pure sort' (*Katholiken reinrassiger Art*). *Ibidem*, p. 414, footnote 92. See also Michael Phayer, who does not think Faulhaber supported racial antisemitic sentiments. Faulhaber was more concerned about 'Jewish Bolshevism'. Phayer: *Catholic Church*, p. 15.

¹⁸⁴ Hannot: *Judenfrage*, pp. 312-13.

urging Catholics not to vote for NSDAP but for Catholic parties. But the former anti-Nazi stand became more and more ambiguous from August 1929. Like the Centre Party leadership, political newspapers began to toy with the idea of a coalition with Hitler's movement. The *Junge Front*, for example, called for a coalition with the NSDAP after the November 1932 elections. It saw the danger rather in the current government, which would not undertake to 'liquidate the liberal capitalistic era'.¹⁸⁵ Several articles expressed the hope that the right would contribute precious forces that would cleanse the state 'from the mistakes of the liberalistic and exaggerated democracy'. *Der Arbeiter* likewise briefly supported a coalition with the NSDAP in September 1932, in order to spite Chancellor Franz von Papen.¹⁸⁶ Criticism of the National Socialist movement in the majority of Catholic newspapers was too often limited to its anti-Christian ideology while its antisemitism was of only secondary concern.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, Catholic papers underestimated the physical danger antisemitism posed to Jews in the years 1930/31. Antisemitic riots such as the one on Berlin's Kurfürstendamm in September 1931 were simply reported as a sign of an increasing 'decline of morality' (*Verwilderung der Sitten*).¹⁸⁸ Alongside the Centre Party's ambition to form a conservative-right coalition at this time, Catholic newspapers grew increasingly nationalistic, borrowing and exploiting *völkisch* vocabulary.¹⁸⁹ This celebration of nationalism went hand in hand with praise for authoritarian leadership and hostile comments about the 'excessive parliamentarianism' of the Weimar Republic. In the election year of 1932 the papers emphasised the Centre's 'national efforts', expressing the hope for a 'national gathering' rooted in strong popular support that would sooth the fear of communism and at the same time prevent a right-wing coup.¹⁹⁰

While the stance of the main Catholic newspapers against the NSDAP became more and more ambiguous, their hostility to communism and fear of a Bolshevik threat

¹⁸⁵ *Junge Front*, 13.11.32, for this and the following quote see Gotto: *Junge Front*, p. 13.

¹⁸⁶ Krenn: *Christliche Arbeiterbewegung*, p. 299.

¹⁸⁷ Hannot: *Judenfrage*, pp. 126-28.

¹⁸⁸ Ibidem, p. 142.

¹⁸⁹ See here, e.g., Cardinal Faulhaber on immorality and indecent literature (*Schmutzliteratur*) cited in *Kirchenbote für Stadt und Bistum Osnabrück*, 25.8.1929, p. 268: 'We have protective laws for everything, but only insufficient legal protection against the contamination of German blood and German youth, against the contamination of holy sources of life. Who will fill our eyes with tears to bemoan day and night the vice that will bring down even the healthiest of all people.'

¹⁹⁰ See, e.g., the *Märkische Volkszeitung* in Berlin continuously emphasised the Centre Party's *Volkstum* and *Germanentum* in November 1932.

remained explicit. The NSDAP was portrayed as the lesser evil in comparison with Bolshevism, while Hitler was seen as a moderate partner compared to other figures of the NSDAP or DNVP. Catholic newspapers from the simple church news bulletin to the big dailies had their watchful gaze fixed on the socialist movements around the world. The godlessness of socialism and the advance of freethinkers in Germany, Russia, Mexico and Spain were lamented throughout 1931 and 1932.

Although the NSDAP and other *völkisch* groups now predominated the field of antisemitic insults in public, Catholic newspapers did not avoid derogatory remarks about Jews. But the manner in which antisemitism was used had changed. In 1932 the socialist movement was still equated with Jewish interest, but less often than in earlier years. The organ of the Catholic Workers' Association in southern Germany had moderated its anti-socialist agitation in the face of a threateningly successful NSDAP. However, it could still define socialism as being 'infected by a Jewish spirit', that it was nothing but a 'nebulous delusion and wishful-thinking by a Jewish-Marxist world'.¹⁹¹ A more subtle method of accomplishing this generalisation was 'Jewish' name-dropping, where the name became representative of the defects of complete professions.¹⁹² Berlin's *Märkische Volkszeitung*, regularly used Jewish names when it discussed the communist movement, or bankruptcies, or fraud (e.g, when it reported on espionage by Rathenau's AEG or government monies for Mosse's publishing house).¹⁹³ Considering that the *völkisch* press ran extensive and explicit antisemitic articles on the same subjects it is difficult to imagine that these generalisations did not confirm the popular negative image of the Jews.

Anti-Jewish comments also became an instrument to ridicule the NSDAP's more extreme version of it. One example was the reaction to the strong support given to Hitler by the English pressbaron, Lord Rothermere. Headlines such as 'A Jew as Hitler's Protector' introduced articles that revealed the 'Jewish' aid given to Hitler

¹⁹¹ *Der Arbeiter*, 22.3.1932, p. 1. *Der Arbeiter* was quite adamant and clear in his condemnation of the right-wing parties and the NSDAP throughout the Weimar Republic. These were seen as vanguards of wealthy Prussian Junkers. National Socialist antisemitism was, however, only rarely mentioned and criticised.

¹⁹² The *Germania* welcomed the closure of a controversial modern art exhibition and pointed its finger to the 'godless freethinkers of the Mosse- and Ullstein papers' who had always supported slander (*Schimpffreiheit*) against the Church. 'Verhinderte Kirchenhetze. Polizeiverbot einer kommunistischen "Kunstaussstellung"', *Germania*, 24.2.1930, p. 3.

¹⁹³ On series of crimes committed by 'foreigners' see *Märkische Volkszeitung*, 1.11.1932, p. 7; 6.11.1932, p. 5.

and ridiculed his allegedly double standards towards the 'Jewish question'.¹⁹⁴ Though these articles clearly had an ironic air, they are a weak proof for Catholic immunity against Jew-hatred or indeed against fascism.¹⁹⁵

The *Gelben Hefte* did not share the self-restraint that the papers of political Catholicism tried to practice. Inaugurated in 1924, the *Hefte* publicised their Judeo-masonic-Bolshevik conspiracy at a time when antisemitism became less prominent in other papers. This went hand in hand with sustained criticism of the Weimar Republic and its democracy, at a time when the papers close to the Centre and the BVP had overcome their initial hostility to the Republic.¹⁹⁶

2.3 Summary and Comparison

Discussions on Jews and Jewry in German Catholic newspapers were considerably more 'racialised' and frequent than in England. In German Catholic publications, antisemitism can be found across the social scale from workers' unions to the educated middle class and aristocratic associations. In their own research, Greive and Altmann (like Nipperdey and Rürup in the Protestant case) identified a class distinction where they single out middle class publications, especially the learned journals, as being particularly prone to antisemitism. Their observation can also be transferred to the Catholic media examined in this chapter. As in England, German Catholic newspapers catering to the middle-class reader consistently derided Jewry and were only outdone by the press of the Catholic conservative right. In contrast to the middle class, the Catholic working class has traditionally been exempt from antisemitic sentiment. Indeed, the use of antisemitism in the publications of the workers' associations seems comparatively restrained. Further differentiations have to be made in terms of geography and political persuasion. At times, region was

¹⁹⁴ 'Ein Jude als Protektor Hitlers', *Deutsche Reichs-Zeitung*, 29.9.1930, p. 1. Similar articles in *ibidem* 3.10.1930; *Bayerischer Kurier*, 3.10.1930; *Augsburger Postzeitung*, 3./4.10.1930; all cited in Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 148.

¹⁹⁵ As claimed by Hannot: *Judenfrage*, p. 147. See Schieder on how the admiration for Mussolini in conservative circles blinded them into toleration of National Socialism. Wolfgang Schieder: 'Fatal Attraction: The German Right and Italian Fascism', in: *The Third Reich between Vision and Reality: New Perspectives on German History*, ed. by Hans Mommsen, Oxford, 2001, pp. 39-59, (p. 52).

¹⁹⁶ There were frequent attempts to 'prove' that the democratic Weimar Republic was unnatural, because unhistorical, to Germany. The *Gelben Hefte* showed sympathy for the fascist government in Italy and increasingly for Hitler's movement. On Mussolini see *GH*, 1 (1924-5), pp. 735-37; *GH*, 5 (1929), pp. 455-57, cited in Herde: 'Max Buchner', p. 197.

more important than class in explaining attitudes to the Jews.¹⁹⁷ Catholic newspapers in Bavaria, Upper Silesia and Westphalia continually printed more antisemitic articles than those in other German regions, especially the Rhineland. These regional differences even existed within one Catholic association, the Catholic Workers' Association. The publication of its south German branch, *Der Arbeiter*, was not free of antisemitism, compared to its west German branch, the *Westdeutsche Arbeiterzeitung (WAZ)*. With an emphasis on the 'Jewish financier' rather than on the dangers to the German nation, *Der Arbeiter* differed from other Catholic publications mostly in its form of antisemitism and its less frequent use. These differences can be explained by the close association of *Der Arbeiter* to the BVP, whereas the *Westdeutsche Arbeiterzeitung* was the organ of the left-wing Rhenish Centre Party.¹⁹⁸ It is, therefore, not possible to attribute antisemitism clearly to a class structure or to the defence strategies of a Catholic diaspora. This attitude was more likely to be part of the political traditions of a particular region. From the mid-1920s, the main restraining force on newspapers was the Centre Party (far less so the BVP), because of its anti-racial ethos and because of the political reality of its competition with the parties on the far right. Publications to the right and left of political Catholicism were considerably more antisemitic. Particularly the press of the Catholic conservative right was in a different league with respect to its antisemitism and its contempt for the Weimar Republic. Hardly an issue of the *Gelben Hefte* was published without an anti-Jewish polemic on the health of the German nation. Within the Catholic community their antisemitism was *völkisch*, and closest to National Socialist Jew-hatred. The *Rechtskatholiken* were most active in Bavaria, Upper Silesia and Westphalia, contributing to the popular antisemitism of these regions.

¹⁹⁷ Unfortunately, regional differences could not be taken into account in the case of Catholic newspapers in England. The most widely read papers were national newspapers or periodicals, whose regional editions did not differ from the national paper apart from one page with local news.

¹⁹⁸ Krenn confirms that the South German Workers' Association moved closer to the BVP in 1918/19. It contributed to the party's programme and solicited in its election campaigns. Krenn: *Christliche Arbeiterbewegung*, p. 299. A similar difference existed in England. Unlike the *Catholic Worker*, the *Catholic Federationist* (the newspaper of the north England Catholic Federation) reproduced the standard antisemitic stereotypes on its pages. This divergence can be explained with reference to the different political outlooks of the individual editor. Thomas Burns, the editor of the *Catholic Federationist*, a prominent trade unionist and secretary of the north England Catholic Federation, was fiercely anti-socialist and conservative in his outlook. He enjoyed the support of Bishop Casartelli of Salford in his anti-socialist publicist endeavours.

The fierceness of anti-Jewish invectives in most Catholic newspapers in the early years of the Weimar Republic, the repeated allegation of Jewish dominance over finance and German culture but above all the vilification of the 'Jew-Bolshevik' bore a resemblance to *völkisch* and later National Socialist antisemitic campaigns. These parallels existed not so much because Catholic antisemitism adapted to the Jew-hatred of National Socialism. If anything, chronology suggests the opposite. National Socialism could tap into a stream of antisemitic stereotypes that were popular and common since the First World War. Uwe Lohalm suggests that the antisemitic agitation and disturbances during the war and the early 1920s were mostly instigated by members of *völkisch* organisations, but it should be added that the newspapers of mainstream Catholicism played a vital role in fostering these sentiments in public discourse.¹⁹⁹ By the time Catholic newspapers decided to restrain their antisemitic vitriol in 1924, the stereotype of a malignant Jewish influence in German society and of Jewish Bolshevism had become popular knowledge on which Hitler and the NSDAP could grow on. The overview of the newspapers of political Catholicism in Germany supports the notion of a Catholic bulwark against National Socialism only to a very limited extent, as their pages were dominated by the struggle against socialism. They spent even less time acting as the defenders of German Jews. Support for the Weimar democracy likewise was not as consequent outside the main Centre Party publications as usually assumed. Particularly papers close to the BVP, the Berlin *Märkische Volkszeitung* and the publications of the Catholic conservative right were very critical of democracy. Until the mid-1920s their articles discredited Weimar democracy by identifying the democratic and social democratic parties with Jewry. While this anti-democratic rhetoric ebbed away between 1924-1931 (even though it continued in the *Gelben Hefte*), it re-emerged in 1932 as a serious discussion about the advantages of an authoritarian government.

The characteristics of anti-Jewish prejudices in the English and German Catholic press were largely similar, especially in their emphasis on 'Jewish Bolshevism'. The differences are few but significant. The discussion of the 'Jewish question' was considerably more 'modern' in the German Catholic press. Here, the religious framework was largely lost, whereas it was almost always present in discussions of

¹⁹⁹ Lohalm: 'Völkisch Origins', pp. 175-89.

the 'Jewish question' in English papers, including random derogatory portraits of the Talmudic Jew or accusations of blood libel. Such allegations were denounced as irrational nonsense by German Catholics. Yet even the *The Month* and *Blackfriars*, and the CGI, with their close association with religious orders and their theological learning were not free of modern antisemitic stereotypes. Although they perceived the 'Jewish question' as a religious predicament and a 'problem' that was best 'solved' by conversion to Catholicism, they also regularly complained about the alleged secular symptoms of this 'question', such as the Jews' usury and their involvement in revolutionary movements.

Most literature on Catholic antisemitism asserts that racial antisemitism was firmly rejected by Catholics. This opposition is also reflected in the Catholic newspapers examined in this overview. However, criticism of National Socialist antisemitism as such and the decrease of antisemitic articles from 1924 onwards should not be read as a sign of Catholic support of Jews, not even of Catholic anti-antisemitism. In racial antisemitism, Catholic authors condemned the Jew-hatred of National Socialists for its violence and supremacy of race, but not Jew-hatred as such. Race science was likewise not unequivocally rejected. Catholic publications participated in the contemporary discourse on 'race' and subsequently adopted its terminology and some of the fundamental axioms of race science. In their description of what constitutes a race and what influences its characteristics, Catholic articles resembled the mainstream discourse including the ambiguity that surrounded the heritability of race characteristics (genetic or environmental factors). They deviated from the scientific and *völkisch* discourse, in that they almost never discussed the necessity to undertake eugenic measures to guarantee the health of the nation. Hermann Muckermann's support of sterilisation as a measure to prevent the 'reproduction' of the sick was more likely to be printed in learned periodicals (e.g., *Der Gral*) than in Catholic newspapers or handbooks.

'Race' in English Catholic newspapers likewise mirrored the general discussion on eugenics in Britain, albeit incompletely and selectively. Authors acknowledged the existence of Jews as a distinct national/racial group, defined by environmentally acquired characteristics. In most cases, this interpretation of Jewry existed alongside its religious definition as adherents of Judaism and rarely adopted the terminology of race science. The concept that Jews were primarily defined by their race was only

advocated by a minority of Catholic writers. Eugenics as such was rejected across the examined publications.

The most striking difference between both discourses on the 'Jewish question' is their chronological divergence. While the numbers of antisemitic remarks declined in German Catholic publications from 1924, it was precisely in this period that the English Catholic media entered its most antisemitic phase with peaks in 1933 and 1938/9. There was an increase both in the frequency and radical character of antisemitic stereotypes. The decrease of antisemitic articles in Germany is largely the result of the political situation and the rise of the National Socialist movement. According to Dirk Walter, the democratic Weimar parties woke up to the dangers of antisemitism after Hitler's failed putsch and the antisemitic riots in Berlin in winter 1923. They eventually became aware that this antisemitism also threatened to destroy the Republic. The democratic parties consequently refrained in their use of antisemitism. Since antisemitism was the essence of their new political competitor on the far right, the condemnation of antisemitism also aimed at this competition. Walter also suggests that antisemitism was generally no longer attractive in political campaigns.²⁰⁰ It is not that English Catholicism was not challenged by fascist antisemitism in the 1930s, but rather that their press was not bound to a party political line that would have curbed antisemitic articles. Most Catholic newspapers were private enterprises, increasingly run by conservative editors who granted Chesterbelloc journalists considerable public space in the 1930s. Obsessed by the threat of an encroaching communism their antisemitic articles largely sought to draw public attention to Catholic interests that, on the international stage at least, were felt to be under threat.

The Catholic hierarchy reacted in different ways to the growth of antisemitic sentiment. The German hierarchy was formally supposed to be politically impartial. However, most German bishops and clergy lent their support to the Catholic parties and their media, and never reprimanded their exploitation of antisemitism. In the case of the English newspapers, the hierarchy eventually used personal channels to restrain the editors' anti-Jewish reports. This happened only hesitantly and late (after

²⁰⁰ Walter: *Antisemitische Kriminalität*, pp. 250-51, p. 21.

1940), while these same communication channels were quite consistently used when prominent Catholics flirted with socialism.²⁰¹ A more steadfast opponent than the hierarchy to antisemitism was the *Catholic Worker*. It is important to note that a paper that addressed the largest social group within English Catholicism did not perpetuate anti-Jewish prejudices and encouraged its readers to oppose antisemitism.

Discourse analysis has often been used as a methodological tool to understand past mentalities. In this case, Catholic newspapers introduce us to the nature of anti-Jewish prejudices at the time. Their regular and frequent print (at least once a week) also documents times when the intensity of antisemitic articles was specifically high, sometimes exposing the occasion that prompted such outbursts. It is possible to understand the common assumptions on the 'Jewish question' that informed Catholic public opinion. Yet this does not allow judgement on the authors' motivation and (more important) the reception of such thoughts by the readers. This method is bound to a text and its exposition in a public sphere. Beyond that, any assumptions are bound to be speculative.

The following chapters will set this indeterminate idea of a 'Jewish question' in a context of historical actors and recipients by tracing its influence on Catholic organisations and single individuals. This extension to the discourse analysis is essential to understanding more fully who was promoting antisemitism and who was most receptive to it.

²⁰¹ Quite well known is the occasion when Cardinal Hinsley tried to persuade Eric Gill to cease his public support for socialist groups. Letter Hinsley to Fr McElliot (Gill's priest), 30.4.1937. AAW, Hi 2 / 55, 1930-40.

3 The Catholic Right, Political Catholicism and Radicalism

According to the words of an outstanding Soviet representative, the world approaches a world-centralism, accelerated by three principal currents: Moscow universalism, materialist-communist based on Asia and propagated by canvassers from all nations; London universalism, again materialist, capitalist, based on America and served by the International of banks; and eventually papal universalism, idealist, spiritual, based on God. The greatest spiritual conflict between extreme capitalism on one side and Bolshevism on the other would dominate the next years if not decades. German Catholicism should use its religious strengths in the chaos of the present.¹

The comment by Adam Stegerwald, general secretary of the Christian Trade Unions in Germany, described a world that many Catholics in England and Germany would have recognised at the time. This image of a world torn between excessive materialism and communism had been at the centre of the Catholic Church's lament against the modern world since the end of the nineteenth century. The Church was fighting a losing battle through measures that oscillated between reaction and reform. The papal Syllabus of Errors (1864) and the encyclical *Pascendi* (1907) offered no compromise with the modern world and its 'errors' such as rationalism, materialism, liberalism and communism. The Church was, however, well aware of the social problems of the time which it demonstrated in the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and its successor *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931). In both encyclicals, the Vatican proposed strategies to offset the negative effects of a modern capitalist economy on the working classes. At the same time, these proposals for a socially just 'third way' aimed to persuade Catholic workers not to turn to socialism for salvation. The society and economy envisioned in these encyclicals was an 'organic', corporatist world where guilds and small economic units formed the ideal economic system. In order to prevent class warfare, the encyclicals admonished employers and employees to co-operate, and asserted workers' rights to a just wage and humane working and living conditions. Yet even in its reform the Vatican's concern remained focused on the dangers of communism and this fear grew with the bouts of religious persecution in Russia after the Bolshevik revolution and was particularly

¹ Adam Stegerwald speaking at the end of the Dortmund *Katholikentag* in 1927 on Catholicism's tasks in the 'enormous world-fermentation-process'. Cited in Ephrem Filthaupt, OP: *Deutsche Katholikentage und soziale Frage 1848-1958*, Essen, 1960, p. 294.

acute at the time of the Spanish Civil War 1936-39.² It has been commonly assumed that this fear of communism blinded if not attracted the Catholic Church to authoritarian and fascist governments. Michael Phayer and John Cornwell have recently extended this assumption and have shown that the anti-communism of the Vatican, and especially of Pius XII, was one of the main factors why the Catholic Church failed to act in time against the Jewish persecution in Hitler's Germany and Europe.³ The obsession with communism proved so durable that neither the experiences of the Church in the Third Reich nor the knowledge of the Holocaust led to a re-assessment of this worldview during and immediately after the Second World War.⁴ Individual German bishops were no exception in this respect. For instance, Baron Sigismund Felix von Ow-Felldorf (1855-1936), as a priest in Regensburg, had preached on 'Jewish' freemasonry and materialism in 1886, and had warned of the danger that they would soon rule the world.⁵ In 1920, his image of the Jews had not changed, when he, now as Bishop of Passau (1906-1936), justified the violent antisemitism after the war as

the natural reaction against the contemptible, heartless, capitalist spirit of usury and against the insane destruction by Bolshevism of all the achievements of culture. Today, the representatives and supporters of these two movements are primarily members of the Jewish tribe and a way of thinking which exists in Judaism is the main vehicle for all these unfortunate phenomena.⁶

When Hitler sought the bishops' loyalty at the time of his military support of General Franco in Spain, Cardinal Faulhaber assured Hitler of their support in his fight against 'international Bolshevism'. In his three-hour interview with the Cardinal, Hitler referred explicitly to an alleged Jewish conspiracy behind communism, which Faulhaber did not comment on further.⁷ Clemens von Galen,

² Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 3-9.

³ Phayer: *Catholic Church*, p. XV, pp. 218-22. Cornwell: *Hitler's Pope*, pp. 112-14, p. 309.

⁴ Since this perception was re-iterated in the draft version of the 'hidden encyclical' against racism and antisemitism *Humanis Generis Unitas* (1938/39) Passelecq and Suchecky reckon that it must have been fairly common within the Church. Georges Passelecq; Bernard Suchecky: *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI*, New York, 1997, pp. 256-57.

⁵ 'Die Messiasidee im modernen Judentum II' published as a series in *Regensburger Morgenblatt*, e.g., on 22.6.1886. Archive des Bistums Passau (ABP), OA NL Bf Sigismund Felix 196.

⁶ Published in an anthology called *Hatred of Jews and the German Spirit* and referring particularly to Kurt Eisner's revolutionary reign in Bavaria. Quoted in Lill: 'German Catholicism's Attitude', p. 152.

⁷ Phayer: *Catholic Church*, pp. 15-17. Phayer doubts that Faulhaber sanctioned Hitler's racism in this interview. The more likely motivation lay in the Cardinal's anti-communism and his belief in a link between liberal Jewry and communism. See also Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg who feared that liberal Jewry undermined German culture. He also justified the antisemitism of Paul de Lagarde with

Bishop of Münster, likewise proved his loyalty to Hitler's Germany in his steadfast patriotic support for Hitler's war in the east. After the war, von Galen co-operated only reluctantly with the Allies, because he felt that their alliance with Soviet Russia had opened Germany's doors to Stalin and therefore to dreaded Bolshevism.⁸

Although the perception that Jews were responsible for revolutionary and materialist tendencies in modern society was quite widespread within the Church, historians have only rarely taken this association into account in their description of Catholic anti-socialism.⁹ The following chapter is in various aspects an extension to the analysis of the antisemitic discourse described in Chapter Two where Jewry often stood for excessive capitalism and international communism. It therefore focuses on the Catholic defence against socialism and 'materialism' and seeks the reflection of this 'written' antisemitic imagery within the two communities, particularly within Catholic educational and political organisations. Yet central to this chapter are those Catholic groups who turned the fight against socialism into their *raison d'être*: the *Rechtskatholiken* in Germany and the Distributists around Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton in England. The two groups share many characteristics, of which their position between the extreme right and mainstream Catholicism is the most interesting.¹⁰ Exploring their worldview and their contacts to the extreme right addresses issues about how important antisemitism was in defining their ideological and political identity. Their position on the right fringe of Catholicism also raises questions about their influence within the community and Catholic reaction to them. The enquiry into the anti-socialism and antisemitism within mainstream Catholicism finally seeks for points of contact with the worldview of the Catholic right.

the same argument. Konrad Gröber: *Handbuch der religiösen Gegenwartsfragen*, Freiburg, 1937, pp. 372-74.

⁸ Beth Griech-Polelle: *Bishop von Galen. German Catholicism and National Socialism*, New Haven, 2002, pp. 132-34.

⁹ Exceptions are the works of Beth Griech-Pollele, Daniel Goldhagen or David Kertzer. At times, however, they take the exact opposite approach and view the Catholic stereotype of the 'Jewish-Bolshevik' as a continuous, universal ideology irrespective of political and social changes over time.

¹⁰ For a comparison of the radical right in Germany and Britain before the First World War see Paul Kennedy; Anthony Nicholls (eds): *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914*, London, 1981. Arnd Bauerkämper: *Die 'radikale Rechte' in Großbritannien. Nationalistische, antisemitische und faschistische Bewegungen vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis 1945*, Göttingen, 1991.

In the case of Germany the organisations in question are the two political parties and their early party programmes and election campaigns, as well as the *Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland* (founded in 1890 and dissolved in July 1933), the largest Catholic educational organisation. The *Volksverein* offered courses, conferences, meetings and publications on political and social issues. In its outlook it was an example of progressive Rhenish reform Catholicism, especially in its consequent support for inter-denominational trade unions (which it followed through despite the bishops' vehement veto). As an umbrella organisation for the numerous Catholic societies, the *Volksverein* is consequently credited with the modernisation of German Catholicism. Apart from the educational mission, it was also active in German politics. Closely associated with the Centre Party it had developed the party's social policy and usually helped to mobilise votes for the Centre. In the late 1920s, the association found itself in a deep crisis marked by a decrease in membership and financial difficulties. The hierarchy had also neglected the *Volksverein* but re-discovered its usefulness in the bishops' struggle against political radicalism from 1928/9.¹¹ With this support behind it and with its national structure, *Volksverein* publications were widely read within political Catholicism. Significant, however, is that one of its main organisations – the Central Committee of the Annual German Catholic Conference (ZdK, *Zentralkomitee des Deutschen Katholikentages*) – afforded the *Rechtskatholiken* a public stage within political Catholicism in 1932.¹²

The section on England also looks into antisemitism within mainstream Catholicism, i.e., the larger Catholic lay organisations and the hierarchy, before turning to Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton as the main intellectual representatives of English

¹¹ Hürten: *Kleine Geschichte*, p. 208. Detlef Grothmann: 'Der "Volksverein fuer das katholische Deutschland" und die Nationalsozialistische Herausforderung der Weimarer Zeit', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 121 (2001), 286-303, (p.286). Detlef Grothmann: 'Verein der Vereine?' *Der Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland im Spektrum des politischen und sozialen Katholizismus der Weimarer Republik*, Cologne, 1997. Gotthard Klein: *Der Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland 1890-1933. Geschichte, Bedeutung, Untergang*, Paderborn, 1996.

¹² The ZdK received its name only in 1952. Before that it had the rather long-winded title of Central Committee for the Preparation of Catholic Associations. For reasons of simplicity, I refer to it as *Zentralkomitee*. The *Zentralkomitee* has been the central organisation for Catholic lay associations in Germany since its origin in the first *Katholikentag* (Central Meeting of the Catholic Organisation of Germany, since 1871 Central Meeting of German Catholics) in October 1848. Ever since organised by the *Zentralkomitee*, the *Katholikentage* were meant to be the showcase for the vitality of German Catholic life. The *Zentralkomitee's* tasks have been to prepare the *Katholikentage*, to see to the implementation of its decisions, and the protection of Catholic lay organisations. Despite the strong emphasis on lay initiative, the hierarchy has also been represented on the *Komitee's* board and at its General Conference.

Catholicism at the time. Given the lack of Catholic political parties in England, this section focuses on the influence of Hilaire Belloc's writing within the community and on the publications of the Catholic Social Guild (CSG) and the Catholic Federation in Salford. These were educational organisations, similar to the *Volksverein* in Germany, albeit with a more limited field of work. Both were middle class organisations that aimed to enlighten the Catholic worker on the social question and the dangers of socialism by means of their publications, summer conferences and public discussions. While the CSG promoted a progressive social policy and a rational education on socialism, the Catholic Federation (with the Catholic Trade Unions as sub-committees) was a more conservative and fiercely anti-socialist organisation. The Federation and the Catholic Trade Unions were founded by Bishop Casartelli who hoped that these organisations would form an effective barrier against socialism. The Federation was led by Thomas Burns who was also secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Trade Unions (NCCTU) and shared Casartelli's fear of socialism.¹³ At election times, the Catholic Federation campaigned for the candidate recommended by the hierarchy (usually conservative), which often left the Federation at odds with the Liberal and later Labour preferences of the Catholic voters. This discordance with the Catholic electorate and Cardinal Bourne's strong disapproval of Burns' uncompromising anti-socialism made the Federation less and less attractive. Between 1921 and 1926 its membership fell from 7,000 to 4,000 and the death of Casartelli in January 1925 almost led to the end of the Federation.¹⁴

The CSG on the other hand was a lay initiative and most of its founding members were influenced by the progressive social thought of the Fabians or John Ruskin.¹⁵ The CSG never formulated a programme nor took explicit stances on current topics, rather they supplied information material and education.¹⁶ Based in Oxford, it was weak in the north and attracted middle class Catholics rather than workers. The

¹³ On a brief history of both societies see Peter Doyle: 'The Catholic Federation 1906-29', in: *Voluntary Religion*, ed. by William J. Sheils, Diana Wood, Studies in Church History, XXIII, Oxford, 1986, pp. 461-76. Peter Doyle: 'Charles Plater SJ and the Origins of the Catholic Social Guild', *Recusant History*, 21 (1993), 401-17.

¹⁴ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 30-33, p. 154.

¹⁵ Of the four founding members Leslie Toke had joined the Fabians, Margaret Fletcher was a disciple of Ruskin and Virginia Mary Crawford was a childhood friend of Beatrice Webb. Crawford had earned notoriety as a participant in a three-in-the-bed scandal with Sir Charles Dilke and his servant, but after her conversion to Catholicism devoted the rest of her life to social work and politics. Ibidem, p. 38.

¹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 41-42.

Guild's initially deliberately vague comments on questions of socialism, property, and workers' rights hardly captured the rather more practical interests of Catholic workers. Its existence as a local middle class reading club changed profoundly after the First World War when the CSG found itself at the zenith of its influence and membership almost doubled within a year (1919). Crucial to this success was Cardinal Bourne's open support for the Guild and the hierarchy's general active interest in social policies at that time. This influential position of the CSG lasted however only as long as the hierarchy remained interested in social policy. This enthusiasm and the willingness to engage with the modern world outside the Church gradually petered out towards the end of the 1920s, when the bishops concentrated on the decline in morals instead.¹⁷ Yet beyond the hierarchy, the interest in social questions was still very much alive among English Catholics and was manifest in the popularity of new organisations such as the Young Christian Workers, the Distributist League and the Catholic Land Movement in the 1930s.¹⁸

Over more than two decades both the CSG and the Catholic Federation informed the Catholic debate on socialism and the social question. As in the German case, the purpose here is to capture the image of 'the Jew' as it was publicised by these Catholic organisations.

In what Eric Hobsbawm has called the 'age of extremes', Catholicism had to face not only socialism, but also fascism and National Socialism. The purpose of this chapter is to probe the ability of mainstream Catholicism to contain the extreme right as well as the fellow-travellers in their own midst, and test the depths and degrees of antisemitism by looking into the role it played in the attempts to contest these ideologies.

In the section on Germany, the view is broadened beyond that of political Catholicism to a wider Catholic community. It investigates the relation between the Catholic right, national right-wing groups and mainstream Catholicism. The dynamics between these different Catholic groups then tells a more nuanced story about resistance and attraction to the extremist right, and about the role of

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 168, pp. 173-74.

¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 182-83.

antisemitism than that of, for example, Rudolf Lill's 'bulwark thesis'. In the case of England, this chapter aims to expand the insular knowledge on Catholics and antisemitism. It places the well-known antisemitism of Chesterton and Belloc, and the Catholic newspapers, as well as the reported Catholic propensity to British fascism, in context with the events of the time and the larger Catholic community.

3.1 Germany

3.1.1 Rechtskatholiken in Weimar Germany

'The right' as it is defined in this section focuses on a specific group: Catholics who had joined the German National People's Party (DNVP) in opposition to the Centre Party's commitment to a democratic republic in 1918.¹⁹ From 1920 they were organised in the DNVP subcommittee, the National Catholic Committee (*Reichskatholiken-Ausschuß der Deutschnationalen Volkspartei*), and became part of the broader network of *Rechtskatholiken*²⁰; who pursued the same aims: the creation of a national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and a corporate state crowned by the monarchy, and above all a defence against Marxism and anti-Christian influences in German society. In addition to the National Catholic Committee (NCC), the *Rechtskatholiken* had other platforms at their disposal, such as the conferences of the Westphalian and Bavarian Catholic aristocracy, the *Politische Kolleg* of Martin Spahn and satellite organisations such as student unions and various newspapers and journals.

Most *Rechtskatholiken* came from Catholic diaspora regions of Westphalia and Upper Silesia, or from Catholic Bavaria and a few from south-west Germany. The majority of them belonged to the upper classes, the aristocracy, and the higher ranks of the Republic's civil service.²¹ The influence of the *Rechtskatholiken* nobility

¹⁹ Hürten: *Kleine Geschichte*, p. 188. Ten DNVP Catholics were also present in the DNVP's Reichstag faction in 1924. Paul Lejeune-Jung to Max Buchner, 26.5.1924. BAK, N1088, Nr. 18.

²⁰ The term *Rechtskatholiken* was used by these Catholics themselves, as well as by the Centre Party and the hierarchy. Horst Gründer: 'Rechtskatholizismus im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik unter der besonderen Berücksichtigung der Rheinlande und Westfalens', *Westfälische Zeitschrift*, 134 (1984), 107-155.

²¹ Gründer: 'Rechtskatholiken', p. 108, p. 153. Hürten: *Kleine Geschichte*, p. 188.

should not be under-estimated. Most of them had good relations with their local bishop or held leading positions in the Republic's administration. For example, meetings of the Westphalian aristocracy were attended by Graf Clemens von Galen, later Bishop of Münster, the brothers Ferdinand and Herrmann von Lüninck who in 1933 became provincial presidents (*Oberpräsident*) of Westphalia and the Rhineprovince, Ildefons Herwegen, abbot of the eminent Benedictine liturgical centre Maria Laach, and Franz von Papen, who was later nominated chancellor in 1932, and vice-chancellor under Hitler in 1933.²² Others were leaders of sizeable popular and populist right-wing associations. August Crone-Münzenbrock was general secretary of the Association of German Peasant Unions (*Vereinigung der deutschen Bauernvereine*), Hermann von Lüninck held several honorary posts in peasant unions and the regional Chamber of Agriculture, Frhr Clemens von Loë-Berghausen was president of the Rhenish Peasants' Union and Frhr Engelbert von Kerckerinck zu Borg held the same position in the Westphalian Peasants' Union. Ferdinand von Lüninck led the *Westfalenbund* and later the para-military, right-wing *Stahlhelm* in Westphalia after the two organisations merged in 1924.²³ In 1929, von Loë and Hermann von Lüninck joined forces with the Rhenish leadership of the National Rural League.²⁴ These associations are not just known for their antisemitic and anti-democratic populism, but also for their political right-wing activism. Six months before the Hitler Putsch in 1923, the *Westfalenbund* of Ferdinand von Lüninck had pledged its support to the nationalist right in Bavaria.²⁵ Nine years later, antisemitic flyers of the National Rural League encouraged Bavarian farmers to vote for Hitler as president and not for Hindenburg. According to the National Rural League, the latter was discredited because Jews and Social Democrats supported his candidacy.²⁶

²² See, e.g., list of participants of a meeting of the Westphalian nobility in 'Bericht über den nationalpolitischen Kursus für den rheinisch-westfälischen katholischen Adel in Willibaldessen, 23.-25. April 1923', BAK, Nachlass Spahn N1324, 177.

²³ Larry Jones: 'Catholic Conservatives in the Weimar Republic: The Politics of the Rhenish-Westphalian Aristocracy, 1918-1933', *German History*, 18 (2000), 60-85, (pp. 143-44).

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 62-64, pp. 66-67, pp. 75-77.

²⁵ Von Lüninck to Spahn, 13.4.1923. BAK, N1324, 93. On their involvement in the putsch see Gabriele Clemens: *Martin Spahn und der Rechtskatholizismus in der Weimarer Republik*, Mainz 1983, pp. 161-62.

²⁶ *Reichslandbund* flyer 'Farmer, open your eyes!', 10.4.1932. BayHStA, FlSlg 231. The support for Hitler was opposed by the Christian Farmers' Association, linked to the Bavarian People's Party.

There was no unified conversion of the *Rechtskatholiken* to National Socialism, since their organisation was only a loose network of the likeminded. In public, DNVP Catholics were still keen to emphasise the differences rather than the similarities between the DNVP and NSDAP.²⁷ However, there is no doubt that most *Rechtskatholiken* found more positive than negative aspects in National Socialism, as private accounts show. Some individuals, such as Frhr Friedrich von Schorlemer, had been members of Hitler's party before 1933, while a large number (including Martin Spahn) only joined after that date. The Bavarian leader of the NCC, the historian Max Buchner, had harboured sympathies for Hitler and his worldview since 1926, yet never joined the NSDAP. Gründer has seen the source of this attraction in the *Rechtskatholiken's* romantic hope for a resurrection of the German Reich, mistaking Hitler's promises of a new Reich as being congruent with their own vision.²⁸

In 1931, the right's journal *Gelben Hefte*, edited by Buchner, devoted a whole issue to the discussion of National Socialism.²⁹ Both supporters and critics were included but in his summary Buchner, himself an admirer of Hitler, tilted the balance in favour of this radical nationalist movement, which was by then a successful party. Buchner had been in personal contact with Hitler since 1926.³⁰ In August 1927 Hitler had visited Buchner together with two nationalist priests, Abbot Alban Schachleiter and Philipp Häuser of Augsburg, and left a positive impression on Buchner.³¹ His joy over Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in 1933 was therefore not just empty lip service to a new government:

We who have for years rejected the pseudo-democracy, who have again and again fought for the idea of leadership (*Führertum*) in contrast to the power of the masses, we naturally pay homage to the idea of leadership in the person who has been its pioneer and representative for years: Adolf Hitler, who today takes Bismarck's place.³²

²⁷ In March 1931 the regional leaders of DNVP Catholics decided that their public statements on the NSDAP should clearly criticise the party's cultural policies. Minutes Meeting, 16.3.1931, p. 5. BAK, N1324, 177.

²⁸ Gründer: 'Rechtskatholiken', p. 155.

²⁹ Winfried Becker: 'Der Einbruch des Nationalsozialismus an der Universität München. Situationsbericht des Studenten Hans Rall an Max Buchner', in: *Bayern vom Stamm zum Staat. Festschrift für Andreas Kraus zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. by Konrad Ackermann, et al, Schriftenreihe zur bayerischen Landesgeschichte 140, 2 vols, Munich, 2002, II, 513-46, pp. 528-29.

³⁰ Herde: 'Max Buchner', p. 197.

³¹ Letter Buchner to Hitler, 27.8.1927. BAK, N1088, 13.

³² Buchner in *GH*, 9 (1933), pp. 745-65, p. 750.

It was not just Buchner's perception that Hitler would resurrect the *Kaiserreich* that won him over. There was considerable and important overlap in both men's worldview. Buchner saw in Hitler the person who could rid German culture of unwelcome foreign influences and create a *Volksgemeinschaft* through the cultivation of nationalism and the German race, while at the same time safeguarding Christian religion.³³ Hitler's most persuasive promise in Buchner's eyes was the protection of Germany against Bolshevism.³⁴

Indeed, for Ferdinand von Lüninck and a number of *Rechtskatholiken* the gap between them and the NSDAP eventually closed in June 1931 when they openly identified with the aims of the Party in a letter sent to Bishop Kaspar Klein of Paderborn.³⁵ The hierarchy did not tolerate the support of the NSDAP by members of the Westphalian nobility. Bishop Klein let it be known that he was not satisfied with the political attitude of the Catholic aristocracy.³⁶ It was not just Hitler's anti-Marxism and nationalism that was so appealing to these nobles. They also accepted the argument for anti-Jewish measures as an alleged remedy for the nation's problems. Those who signed the letter in June 1931 called for explicit Catholic support of Hitler in order to defeat Marxism and stop the 'deterioration' of the German race: 'Likewise, the relentless fight against the unhealthy dominance of Jewry in our political, economic and cultural life is to be supported; because everywhere where the forces of decomposition rose in past and present, they are headed by the Jewish element, the "Element of Decomposition".'³⁷

At the beginning of Hitler's chancellorship, Franz von Papen sought to centralise the activities of the Catholic right, first in his 'Cross and Eagle' League of Catholic

³³ Buchner in *GH*, 9 (1933), pp. 745-65, pp. 756-59. Though Buchner had criticised the anti-clerical excesses of the Rosenberg section of National Socialism, he was adamant that Hitler would protect Christianity, as he promised in *Mein Kampf*. Buchner in *GH*, 8 (1932), pp. 165-203.

³⁴ Buchner in *GH*, 9 (1933), pp. 745-65, pp. 756-59.

³⁵ The following quotes are taken from a letter to Bishop Klein, Paderborn, from Frhr v. Elverfeldt, Graf Wilhelm Droste zu Vischering, Frhr v. Schorlemer-Overhagen, Frhr Reinhard v. Brenken, Frhr v. Fürstenberg-Körtlinghausen, Frhr v. Lüninck-Ostwig, 1.6.1931. In this letter they asked Bishop Klein to withdraw the hierarchy's ban on the *Stahlhelm* and the NSDAP and its support for the Centre Party. BAOS, 04-61-00-10/11. Jones: 'Catholic Conservatives', p. 79.

³⁶ The message was conveyed by Ildefons Herwegen in his meetings with the Catholic Rhenish nobility. His correspondence 24./30.9.1931. BAOS, 04-61-00-11. Clemens von Galen tried to defuse the crisis between the Catholic nobles and Archbishop Klein, but failed because of the nobles' persistence. Jones: 'Catholic Conservatives', p. 79.

³⁷ Letter to Bishop Klein, Paderborn, from Frhr. v. Elverfeldt, and others, 1.6.1931. BAOS, 04-61-00-10/11.

Germans (*Kreuz und Adler*), then in the Coalition of Catholic Germans (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholischer Deutscher, AKD*).³⁸ Both were meant as surrogates for political Catholicism, following its dissolution in the summer of 1933. These organisations saw their task as the promotion of nationalist solidarity among Catholics, strengthening Catholic co-operation with the NSDAP, improving the relation between Church and state and clearing up any misunderstandings between the two.³⁹ The Coalition, however, never had the organisational depth of the National Catholic Committee of the DNVP. Its sole purpose was to place a few intermediaries at the intersection of Church, Party and state.⁴⁰ This hollow shell of an organisation was neither popular with the Catholic population, nor with the bishops who resented a Catholic organisation that was simply imposed on them.⁴¹ As a result of the regime's coordination strategy and the violent intimidation against prominent Catholics, including von Papen, during the so-called Röhm putsch, the Coalition was eventually disbanded in September 1934.⁴²

The chief significance of the *Rechtskatholiken* did not lie in their *Standespolitik* as nobles or in their party politics as members of the DNVP, but in their ability to create a network of educational institutions teaching a Christian national worldview.

³⁸ The AKD was founded on 3 October 1933 by decree of Rudolf Hess. It was led by Franz von Papen, its national secretary was Dr Graf Thun, assisted in the regions by Secretary of State Hans Dauser in Munich, Major (retired) Hermann von Detten, Berlin, and *Regierungspräsident* Rudolf zur Bonsen, Cologne. 'Merkblatt mit Auszug aus den Satzungen', Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln (EAK), Gen 23.75 AKD. In October 1931, representatives of the *Stahlhelm*, DNVP and NSDAP (Carl Frhr v. Schorlemer, NSDAP; Georg Lossau (*Katholische Vereinigung für nationale Politik*); Dr Edgar v. Schmidt-Pauli, *Stahlhelm*) had already announced the creation of a Coalition of Catholic Germans (AKD). Their publications were anti-Centre, anti-Marxist and antisemitic, and encouraged reading the nationalist press and supporting Hitler. There are too few sources on both organisations to suggest a direct link. Both programmes are very much alike, as are the names, yet none of the signatories of the early AKD made it into the leadership of the 1933 Coalition. For some of their publications / programmes see BayHStA, FlSlg 107; Minn 73598.

³⁹ Von Papen toured the cities, re-assuring his audience that National Socialism and the papal encyclicals were compatible (as in Gleiwitz, 14.1.1934). 'Mitteilungsblatt AKD. Tätigkeitsbericht', (n.d.). EAK, Gen 23.75 AKD.

⁴⁰ Ibidem. Also von Papen's speech before members of the AKD, 9.11.1933, explaining the organisation's tasks. Franz v. Papen: *Der 12. November 1933 und die deutschen Katholiken. Rede gehalten vor der Arbeitsgemeinschaft katholischer Deutscher, Köln 9.11.1933*, Münster, 1934, p. 11.

⁴¹ Bishop Clemens von Galen was among the few bishops who supported von Papen's Cross and Eagle. Gründer: 'Rechtskatholiken', p. 151. On public opinion see press note to Aachen vicariate 21.3.1934. Bischöfliches Diözesanarchiv Aachen (BDA), J 22,I AKD. The episcopate left it to the individual clergy and Catholic to decide whether they wanted to join the Coalition. Bertram was not only indignant at being overlooked, but also at the AKD's implication that Catholics were lacking in patriotism. Bertram to von Papen (in copy to bishops), 7.10.1933. EAK, Gen 23.75 AKD.

⁴² For von Papen's resignation statement see 'Mitteilungsblatt 20.9.1934', EAK, Gen 23.75 AKD. Some members of Papen's conservative circle had been murdered in the night of the 'Röhm putsch'. Becker: 'NS an der Uni München', pp. 540-41.

Rechtskatholiken offered an alternative to nationalist-minded Catholics who were likewise repelled by the anti-Catholicism of *völkisch* groups and the coalition between the Centre Party and the SPD. A mixture of nationalist pride and Catholic faith would soon become a pole to which sections of the disintegrating Catholic milieu (particularly Catholic youth, students, and academics) gravitated. Larry Jones, in his excellent article on the Westphalian Catholic nobility has already remarked on the affinity for nationalist movements among *Rechtskatholiken* and their outright support of National Socialism from 1931. Jones also has seen their racial antisemitism as an important factor in their worldview. In addition, he has accused them of having paved the way for Hitler, exposing their affinity not as a strategy of containment, but as an integral part of the alliance with Hitler.⁴³ Jones is one of the few who has addressed the virulence of antisemitism among influential individuals in the Catholic establishment as a factor in their attraction to National Socialism. Nevertheless, the reader is left with the impression that the Catholic right was a small though vocal circle of the upper classes. The *Rechtskatholiken* have so far been underestimated in their role as bridge-builders between the extreme right and sections of the Catholic mainstream. The group of *Rechtskatholiken* is interesting in the context of the widely observed convergence on the right at the end of the Weimar Republic and the long debated influence of thinkers of the 'conservative revolution' on the advance of National Socialism.⁴⁴ If the worldview and activities of the *Rechtskatholiken* are interpreted in the broader framework of German Catholicism, the question of convergence can also be understood in the Catholic context. The investigation of such intersections has often been impaired because Catholic rejection of the *völkisch* movement or antisemitism has been taken at face value. It is often forgotten that such statements were primarily aimed at specific political groups or individuals (NSDAP, Ludendorff, Rosenberg) rather than at the ideas that stood

⁴³ Jones: 'Catholic Conservatives', p. 85.

⁴⁴ On German conservatism and the radical right see Geoff Eley: *Reshaping the German Right. Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck*, London, 1980. Larry Jones; James Retallack (eds): *Between Reform, Reaction and Resistance. Studies in the History of German Conservatism from 1789-1945*, Oxford, 1993. On the conservative revolution see the classic by Kurt Sontheimer: *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik. Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 und 1933*, Munich, 1962. Another classic, but less critical: Armin Mohler: *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland. 1918-1932. Grundrisse ihrer Weltanschauung*, Stuttgart, 1950. Lately, Stefan Breuer: *Anatomie der Konservativen Revolution*, Darmstadt, 1993. Roger Woods: *The Conservative Revolution in the Weimar Republic*, Basingstoke, 1996.

behind these concepts. There has been only limited research into the ways such ideas were adapted to a Catholic discourse on *Volkstum* or the 'Jewish question'.⁴⁵

For these reasons, the section on the *Rechtskatholiken* first looks at their antisemitism, before discussing their organisational structure and their activities. Whether the *Rechtskatholiken* succeeded in attracting a sizeable number of Catholics to their cause and weakened the political monopoly of political Catholicism can be assessed from archival records that show the effect of their activities on political Catholicism. The reactions of Catholic youth and some lay organisations to the right's challenge suggest that their political outlook was brought more into line with that of the right and moved further away from the Centre's commitment to the parliamentary system. In many cases this was not just the result of a failed containment but of an active convergence on the right.

3.1.1.1 *The Worldview and Aims of Rechtskatholiken*

Max Buchner, editor of the *Gelben Hefte*, brought the *Rechtskatholiken*'s manichean outlook on the world to the point. Writing in the *Gelben Hefte*, Buchner argued that there existed a division between the 'Christian-patriotic battlefront', the Catholic parties and a third 'front, which was in political terms democracy ... and in spiritual terms mainly Jewry, liberalism and freemasonry'.⁴⁶ Antisemitism was justified, he claimed, because it was necessary to 'fight the notorious ills that have been established by Jewry since 1917 and have robbed our public life of our best values.'⁴⁷

The worldview of the *Rechtskatholiken* was a manichean ideology similar to that of the *völkisch* movement (although until 1931 they would distance themselves from the *völkisch* milieu) and a constituent part of it was their antisemitism. 'The Jew' had become the embodiment of the ills of modern society. Their 'distinct racial

⁴⁵ A good example of such an intersection is presented in Vogel: *Nationale Kampfverbände*, Mainz, 1989. Also Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, Heidelberg, 1969.

⁴⁶ Buchner's inauguration speech celebrating the launch of the *Gelben Hefte* in June 1924. BAK, N1088, 128.

⁴⁷ Ibidem.

character’⁴⁸ was thought to embrace everything un-German, foreign and un-Catholic: liberalism, communism, freemasonry, relentless capitalism, immorality, and sleaze. Antisemitism, understood as a defence against Jewish influence, was the solution to reversing these defects. Despite their affinity with *völkisch* antisemitism, religious anti-Jewish traditions continued to play a role in their explanation for the existence of a ‘Jewish question’. Biblical portraits of Jewish hostility against Christians were often recalled in order to prove and justify modern Jewry’s enmity against Christian and thus German culture.

The ‘solution’ of the ‘Jewish question’ was generally a central aim of the *völkisch* manichean worldview that saw the root causes of Germany’s post-war problems embodied in the ‘Jewish question’. This ideology was set out in the 1920 programme of the DNVP Catholics. Outraged at the signing of the Versailles treaty and the Weimar constitution, the National Catholic Committee of the DNVP championed the return to a monarchy, the god-given authority of the aristocracy, and rejected democracy. The Weimar constitution in particular was repudiated, because it had grown out of a revolution. According to these Catholics, the future state ought to be a corporate state on the lines defined by Pope Leo XIII. Otherwise, they were convinced, the ‘lurking poison of the atheistic concept of the state and society would lead to the moral decomposition of the people’s body and soul’.⁴⁹ Thus, they continued, the

most important task of the present lies in the maintenance and revival of the Christian nationalist idea, particularly among the masses that have been seduced by socialism. This task determines at the same time our stance towards the Jewish question. While we acknowledge the law of Christian charity that excludes no-one, we are not prepared to concede to an alien and international people either secret nor public political influence that exceeds their numbers by far, that threatens our cultural identity and usually does not contribute to a Christian national education (*Volkserziehung*).⁵⁰

In spring 1923 the *Politische Kolleg* and the National Catholic Committee prepared to organise a conference for the Westphalian aristocracy. Further conferences of this

⁴⁸ Letter Spahn to Susanne Thomas, 13.6.1925. BAK, N1324, 115. Max Buchner lecture ‘Deutsche Freiheitsbewegung und monarchischer Staatsgedanke’, University of Würzburg, 22.7.1932. BAK, N1088, 128.

⁴⁹ Letter National Catholic Committee to nuncio (Eugenio Pacelli), (n/d, most likely August 1920). Archiv des Westfälisch-Lippischen Landwirtschaftsverbandes, Münster (WLV), Nachlass Schorlemer.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

kind followed over the years to come. Their purpose was not to prepare political action, but to strengthen their ideological resolve and prevent deeper division.⁵¹ To the historian, these meetings are a display of the worldview of the Catholic conservative right and their definition of a 'Jewish question'.⁵²

Eventually, on 23 April 1923, forty-three out of the seventy-five invited members of the Rhenish-Westphalian nobility arrived in Willibaldessen to enjoy the hospitality of Baroness and Baron von Wrede and to discuss the 'important national problems' in a truly 'Catholic spirit'.⁵³ Among them were Count Franz von Galen, who had the chair, his brother Clemens von Galen, future Bishop of Münster, and Franz von Papen, who spoke on the Catholic nobility's attitude to the political parties. Franz von Papen's talk spurred a lively discussion, for opinions within the nobility were deeply divided. Franz von Papen, as well as Count Clemens von Galen, argued for an association with the Centre Party. Von Papen saw therein the possibility of steering the Centre towards a conservative-nationalist position in order to achieve their aims within the legal parliamentary framework. Others thought the DNVP would be best suited to looking after their interests. In the ensuing discussion the participants agreed on several points. First, it was out of the question to support the socialist and liberal parties. Second, Catholic principles were neither represented by the Centre Party, which had been 'infected with liberal-democratic-socialist ideas', nor by the DNVP, which still often 'adhered to Protestant errors'. Third, a further Catholic party would be desirable but utopian. It was concluded that the only feasible way to gain political influence was to increase their following in Catholic voluntary organisations and the nationalist movement, while at the same time, most importantly, influencing public opinion by constant repetition of nationalist Catholic principles.

The theme of '*Volkstum*, Jewry and freemasonry' featured heavily in many speakers' presentations. Martin Spahn spoke of the anti-German influences of the lodges and Jewry in the world economy. He also recommended a living space policy

⁵¹ Jones: 'Catholic Conservatives', p. 68.

⁵² Letter Lüninck to Spahn, 13.4.1923. BAK, N1324, 93.

⁵³ All the following quotes are taken from the minutes of the conference 'Bericht über den nationalpolitischen Kursus für den rheinisch-westfälischen katholischen Adel in Willibaldessen, 23.-25. April 1923', BAK, N1324, 177. Also Jones: 'Catholic Conservatives', p. 68.

(*Lebensraumpolitik*) towards Central Europe (*Mitteleuropa*) as Germany's sole option in foreign policy.⁵⁴ Count Joseph Stolberg-Stolberg eventually spoke directly on 'Freemasonry, Jewry and the Press', revealing a Jewish-masonic conspiracy aiming to destroy 'the entire religious and national order that Christianity has introduced [...] in order to introduce a new order according to their own plans'.⁵⁵ Stolberg saw proof of his claims in the 'Protocols of Zion' and the influential 'Jewish press'. He closed with an appeal to 'counter these pernicious forces with all might'.⁵⁶ Stolberg's presentation was followed by a discussion of the 'Jewish question' and the 'Protocols of Zion' in particular.

The minutes of the Willibaldessen conference do not say which of the participants championed certain opinions, but there was a consensus on three points. First, the accusations of the 'Protocols' were plausible because of their 'inner truth', their confirmation through recent events and the fact that Jews had sought to hinder their distribution.⁵⁷ Second, the assimilation of Jewry and *Germanentum* along Anglo-Saxon lines was impossible, because the German nature (*'die bodenständige, nationale, produktivarbeitende Einstellung'*) was intrinsically contrary to the 'Jewish spirit'. Third, fighting Jewry did not contradict Catholic principles, on the contrary: 'since Christ's death the Jews are the rejected people, God's scourge, the main representatives of materialism, decomposition, of anti-Christendom'. One means of that struggle against Jewry (in particular the international Jewish financier) was to gather the economic and financial means of the 'traditional' elements, i.e., the co-operatives and peasant banks. This way, one of the central aims of the *Rechtskatholiken* – the corporatist state – was indirectly turned into a means to 'solve' the 'Jewish question'.

Although the rhetoric of the *Rechtskatholiken* reminds us today of National Socialist Jew-hatred, the congruity was not yet accomplished. On various occasions members of the group denounced National Socialism and its antisemitism as vile race hatred. However, these declarations must not be taken as a rejection of antisemitism as such,

⁵⁴ Minutes of the conference 'Bericht über den nationalpolitischen Kursus für den rheinisch-westfälischen katholischen Adel in Willibaldessen, 23.-25. April 1923', BAK, N1324, 177.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁷ For this and the following three arguments see ibidem.

since the dislike of National Socialist antisemitism refers to its violent form, rather than its content. Martin Spahn rejected the notion that the 'Jewish question' was a 'spiritual question', as suggested by his former Jewish secretary, Susanne Thomas. Instead he emphasised the distinct racial character Jewry had developed. Spahn felt that this character had become so strong that the relation between Jews and *Deutschtum* had become a question that demanded to be answered.⁵⁸ However, Spahn was not prepared to exclude all Jews from a German *Volksgemeinschaft*. Only Jews who 'cling to their race with all might' or those who were 'truly devoted to becoming part of the German people' were not part of a Jewish-German struggle.⁵⁹

The *Rechtskatholiken* rarely outlined a concrete anti-Jewish policy. More often they simply resorted to antisemitic proclamations, blaming the Jews for the current state of affairs in Germany. If they did suggest more specific measures, they ranged from defensive steps such as stressing the need to strengthen traditional Christian German culture in the face of a perceived Jewish threat, to very concrete discriminatory calls for new anti-Jewish laws to restrict Jewish influence.⁶⁰

The question of the purpose of the *Rechtskatholiken*'s antisemitism is best answered by Shulamit Volkov's concept of a 'cultural code', as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis. As part and parcel of their German-nationalist ideology, antisemitism permeated all their organisations, their conference procedures and their correspondence. Articles in their own publications and those of the nationalist press expressed their negative view of modern Jewry. Their common Jew-hatred could gloss over deep-seated Catholic-Protestant tensions, unite the two Christian denominations under one nationalism, and single out the Jews instead. Martin Spahn's own definition of the function of the right's antisemitism also supports its role as 'cultural code':

I see the fight against the excessive domination of Jewry as one of our main objectives. We have to be antisemites, both as Christians and as Germans; it cannot be ignored that especially Jewry putrefies our religion and our patriotic ideals in every respect. We must, however, insist that the nature of today's antisemitism evolves into a more idealistic form. Today it is mainly based on race hatred and hostility. As long as it remains that way, it is something negative and cannot create positive values. We have to draw a sharp

⁵⁸ Letter Spahn to Susanne Thomas, 13.6.1925. BAK, N1324, 115.

⁵⁹ Ibidem.

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

separation between the rabid *Hakenkreuzler* and have to develop our attitude towards Jewry into a positive Christianity and *Germanentum*.⁶¹

Max Buchner's response to the Association in Defence against Antisemitism (*Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus*) is another example of how deeply antisemitism permeated his worldview. Max Buchner was an important figure among the *Rechtskatholiken* as leader of the Catholics in the Bavarian DNVP and editor of the right's journal, the *Gelben Hefte*. Buchner was full professor for medieval and Bavarian history at the University of Würzburg from 1926 and was made *Ordinarius* of the history department at the University of Munich in 1936.⁶² Apart from his work for the *Gelben Hefte*, Buchner also regularly published in the Catholic academic journal, *Historische Jahrbuch*.⁶³ Amongst his aristocratic connections were amicable links to the imperial family and Wilhelm II himself.⁶⁴

The Association in Defence against Antisemitism had invited Buchner to speak against antisemitism at one of their public meetings in May 1930 – an offer Buchner declined, but he nevertheless penned his opinion on the 'Jewish question' and antisemitism.⁶⁵ He declared that this was not merely an abstract opinion about Jewry, but about a struggle against the well-known damages modern Jewry had caused German identity and culture, especially since its triumph in the 1917 Russian Revolution. It was also a struggle against Jewish domination which robbed German public life of its most treasured values. This struggle, he believed, should be fought with fair means, not with rabid Jew-baiting. However, he displayed considerable sympathy for the 'strong antisemitic (*judenfeindliche*) wave that runs through the greater part of our people'.⁶⁶ In Buchner's view the anti-Jewish measures of the past, as well as the current antisemitic rhetoric and action, were justified and pardonable because these arose only out of self-defence.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Letter Spahn to *Ring deutscher Katholiken*, 2.2.1925. BAK, N1324, 185.

⁶² Herde: 'Max Buchner', pp. 204-207.

⁶³ Becker: 'NS an der Universität München', pp. 517-18. For information on Buchner's life, work and political outlook see *ibidem*, pp. 516-19. Herde: 'Max Buchner', pp. 190-94.

⁶⁴ Becker: 'NS an der Uni München', pp. 517-18, p. 527.

⁶⁵ Buchner declined because he felt used by the Association as negative target, and because his participation at such an event would lead to misunderstandings within the *völkisch* movement. Buchner to *Verein zur Abwehr*, 21.5.1930. For further correspondence between the Association and Buchner see BAK, N1088, 32.

⁶⁶ Buchner to *Verein zur Abwehr*, 21.5.1930. BAK, N1088, 32.

⁶⁷ The racial notion in Buchner's thought that accounted for a peoples' union and distinction from others was quite clear in his remark that: '*Volk* to us always holds something blood-like (*blutmässiges*).' In: Buchner lecture 'Deutsche Freiheitsbewegung und monarchischer Staatsgedanke'

3.1.1.2 *The Network*

3.1.1.2.1 *The National Catholic Council of the DNVP*

In 1920, Hermann Freiherr von Lüninck, one of the leading personalities among the *Rechtskatholiken*,⁶⁸ assessed the political landscape of the Weimar Republic in his 'Thoughts on Centre Party politics'. He believed that large sections of the nobility, peasantry, academia and elements among the clergy felt alienated by the Centre Party's co-operation with social democracy. In order to create the envisioned Christian conservative party, Lüninck hoped to draw conservatives to the Centre Party, who might then be willing to set up a new party on the right of the Centre. He hoped that this new party would then promote a policy based on a Christian state philosophy, which meant an organic organisation of society, divided into estates with the monarch heading the state. The protection of private ownership was asserted, while popular sovereignty and parliamentarianism were rejected.⁶⁹

The dream of such a Catholic party was soon abandoned after the failure of the Christian People's Party (CVP) in the February 1921 Prussian state election.⁷⁰ *Rechtskatholiken* then placed their emphasis on a revival of Imperial *Sammlungspolitik* by devoting their efforts to political lobbying and to the education of the younger generation in a Christian-nationalist worldview, which they hoped would permeate all levels of German society. At the centre of this *Sammlungspolitik* was the NCC, but their network included the most important names and

given at University Würzburg, 22.7.1932. Both in BAK, N1088, 128. Buchner essay 'Zum Geheimbundwesen in alter und neuer Zeit. Zugleich ein Beitrag zu den inneren Zusammenhängen zwischen Freimaurertum und Republik', (n.d.), p. 813, p. 818. BAK, N1088, 130.

⁶⁸ Gründer: 'Rechtskatholiken', p. 142. Hermann von Lüninck entered the Prussian civil service in 1918 and was appointed *Regierungsassessor* of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. He left the Republic's civil service in 1923 and concentrated on agrarian associations instead. He was appointed Provincial President of the Rhineprovince in 1933 but resigned in 1935. Later in the Third Reich he joined the conservative resistance movement around Carl Gördeler for which he was imprisoned after the failed attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944. *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie*, ed. by Walther Killy, Rudolf Vierhaus, 12 vols, Munich, 1995-2000, XI (1995), pp. 519-20.

⁶⁹ Hermann von Lüninck: 'Gedanken zur Zentrums politik', 20.6.1920. BAK, N1324;93.

⁷⁰ The Catholic People's Party (CVP) made its debut on 13.4.1920. It fielded its own candidates in the Cologne, Aachen, Koblenz, Trier districts for the following Reichstag election in June and received 65,000 votes (almost all on the expense of the Centre). After the dismal result of the Prussian state election a year later, the party gradually faded. Jones: 'Catholic Conservatives', pp. 64-65.

organisations of the radical right. They maintained close links to the *Stahlhelm* and the *Jungdeutsche Orden*, the *Juniklub* of conservative revolutionary Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, and industrialists Hugenberg and Stinnes. Besides these prominent organisations and individuals of the nationalist right, *Rechtskatholiken* were also warmly welcomed in the Benedictine monastery Maria Laach, where abbot Ildefons Herweghen became their link to the hierarchy.⁷¹ From 1924 the monastery voted almost en bloc for the DNVP.⁷²

The National Catholic Council of the DNVP eventually emerged from a constituent meeting on 10 August 1920.⁷³ Because the organisational form of the NCC was designed as lobby group without cultivating democratic links to the electorate, its membership consisted of no more than twenty members, ideally of high-ranking influential Catholics. Like its predecessor (*Katholiken Ausschuss der Staatspolitischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft*), its main purpose was to recruit Catholics to the DNVP and to strengthen Catholic interests within the party. Dr Paul Lejeune-Jung felt it was the right hour for such a campaign since 'the integral elements were pushing towards the right'.⁷⁴ In its programme the Council also committed itself to representing Catholic interests and denominational parity within the party and its media. The biggest task, however, was to defend their Catholicity against criticism

⁷¹ See, e.g., Herweghen's correspondence with bishop Berning of Osnabrück, 24./30.9.1931. BAOS, 4-61-00-11.

⁷² Vogel: *Nationale Kampfverbände*, p. 288. On Maria Laach and its rightist politics see Richard Faber: 'Politischer Katholizismus. Die Bewegung von Maria Laach', in: *Religions- und Geistesgeschichte der Weimarer Republik*, ed. by Hubert Cancik, Düsseldorf, 1982, pp. 136-58.

⁷³ For negotiations on its foundation see correspondence Dr Karl B. Ritter (Catholic priest in DNVP, also lecturer at Spahn's *Politische Kolleg*. BAK, N1324, 54), Berlin, 23.12.1919, with von Landsberg, von Schwerin, chairmen of the *Katholiken Ausschuss der Staatspolitischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, 29.12.1919. Also letter Hergt to *Katholische Ausschuss*, 2.1.1920. WLW, Akten zum Reichsausschuß der Deutschen Katholiken der DNVP (RKA).

⁷⁴ Lejeune-Jung's reference to 'integral elements' meant conservative, ultramontane Catholics. German historiography on German Catholicism usually differentiates between integral and reform Catholics. On the link between the intensity of antisemitism and ultramontanism see Olaf Blaschke: 'Katholizismus und Antisemitismus', p. 266. For Lejeune-Jung's remark and results of the meeting see minutes of the NCC constituent meeting, 10.8.1920. WLW, Akten RKA. Present were Frhr Engelbert von Landsberg-Drensteinfurt; General von Gallwitz, MdR; Prof Dr theol W. Koch, priest of Binsdorf-Württemberg; pastor Thiel, Naumburg a. Bober; Dr Lejeune-Jung, Berlin; author Hans Berthold, Berlin Wilmersdorf; Frhr von Schorlemer-Lieser; Professor Koch, Breslau (both not present but agreed to results) archivist Dr Pritze, Berlin, economist Weilnböck, MdR. Representing the party leadership were von Lindeiner, and Gräf-Anklam, MdL.

of Catholics close to the Centre Party and to seek the bishops' placet for Catholics wanting to join the DNVP.⁷⁵

3.1.1.2.2 *The Satellite Organisations*

Apart from the triangle NCC, *Stahlhelm* and Maria Laach, the network of the *Rechtskatholiken* branched out into further educational institutions, organisations and nationalist publications, all of which propagated their *völkisch* worldview, aims and activities as well as its antisemitism. Frhr Herrmann von Lüninck and Martin Spahn were the two most important individuals in this expanding network. Martin Spahn (1875-1945), son of the respected former Centre Party leader Peter Spahn, was professor of modern history, and a Centre politician before he joined the DNVP in 1920. This earned him the distrust of the Rhenish Centre Party, especially of Konrad Adenauer. The left-wing Centre politician Josef Joos feared at the time that Spahn's popularity among workers and academics would end in a substantial migration of Centre votes to the nationalist right. In the end, Spahn's membership in the DNVP created less of a stir among Catholic workers than among Catholic nobles, higher civil servants, and military circles, many of who eventually followed Spahn's example.⁷⁶ From 1928, Martin Spahn was the leading figure of the Catholic right.⁷⁷

In 1920, Martin Spahn helped to create the *Politische Kolleg* with the co-operation of conservative youth organisations (mainly student unions), the *Juniklub*⁷⁸ and the DNVP. The Young Conservatives of the *Juniklub* saw in the *Politische Kolleg* the opportunity to move away from immediate political action towards long-term political re-education. According to Martin Spahn, the content of this education should connect and invigorate the concepts of Reich and living space, and Reich and

⁷⁵ 'Arbeitsprogramm für den Reichsausschuß der Katholiken in der Deutschnationalen Volkspartei', WLV, Akten RKA. Frhr von Landsberg was nominated chairman, Paul Lejeune-Jung was vice-chairman. Other members of the council were those present at the constituent meeting. Minutes Constituent Meeting, 10.8.1920. WLV, Akten RKA.

⁷⁶ Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, pp. 172-73.

⁷⁷ Gründer: 'Rechtskatholiken', p. 148. Vogel: *Nationale Kampfverbände*, pp. 138-39. Generally on Martin Spahn's biography and relation to the Catholic right see Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, Mainz, 1983.

⁷⁸ The *Juniklub* was an organisation of young conservatives who were strongly opposed to the Weimar Republic. Historiography knows them today in the context of the Conservative Revolution. The *Juniklub* also kept a close liaison with the Organisation Escherich, an antisemitic para-military organisation with grand visions to strike against the left in a concerted blow with the Reichswehr. On Escherich see Michael Burleigh: *The Third Reich. A New History*, London, 2001, p. 53.

Volk.⁷⁹ Generously endowed by Hugenberg, Stinnes and other industrialists and wealthy landowners, the finances of the *Kolleg* were secure until 1924. Apart from Hugenberg, most private investors withdrew their financial support in 1924 once the Republic was politically more stable, when they reverted to focusing on their business rather than on undermining the Republic. After a brief spell of financial insecurity, the *Kolleg's* situation improved in 1927 thanks to government funds made available by the DNVP-Centre government of Hermann Marx after the *Kolleg* announced its co-operation with the democratic *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik*. The two - educational institutions were initially competitors. The *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik* was founded in 1920 in the spirit of Max Weber and Friedrich Naumann. Over the years it had counted prominent thinkers amongst its lecturers including the historian Friedrich Meinecke, the economist Werner Sombart, Hugo Preuss, and Hajo Holborn. Carl Schmitt joined the *Hochschule* in 1927 at a time when its research department and management board was largely staffed with scholars of a conservative right worldview who supported a co-operation with Spahn's *Politische Kolleg*.⁸⁰

The lecture series of the *Politische Kolleg*, and its courses and conferences were poised to investigate the principles of a national regeneration from a supra-party but nationalist view to inspire future political leaders. The *Kolleg* offered special weekly courses on 'Race, People, State' and on 'World Revolution and *Völkisch* Policy'. Participants could also learn about the 'Jewish Question in the Light of Racial Disintegration', based on the writings of the forefathers of racial antisemitism: Paul de Lagarde, Julius Langbehn, Houston Steward Chamberlain, and Eugen Dühring.⁸¹ Among their speakers was Spahn himself, other DNVP members, such as Dr. Lejeune-Jung, and Count Ernst Reventlow. Over the years, the personnel of the *Politische Kolleg* were invited to numerous talks in and outside Germany. Spahn, with his re-discovery of Central Europe and his emphasis on the problems of ethnic Germans outside the borders of the Reich was particularly popular as speaker.⁸²

⁷⁹ Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, p. 155.

⁸⁰ The *Kolleg* was initially deliberately designed as counterbalance to the democratic *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik*. Wilhelm Bleek: *Geschichte der Politikwissenschaft in Deutschland*, Munich, 2001, p. 213, pp. 198-228. Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, p. 154, pp. 167-68.

⁸¹ *Politische Kolleg* lecture timetable winter 1924/25. 'Lehrpläne für national-politischer Lehrgang für Studenten, 1921-26', BAK, R118, 19, Heft 2, Politisches Kolleg, 42; 54 respectively.

⁸² Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, pp. 158-59.

Spahn's *Politische Kolleg* addressed its political education principally to academics, farmers and youth leaders. The courses of the *Kolleg* were advertised in military circles and nationalist organisations and attracted on average thirty to fifty participants per course. The courses took place weekly in local inns in different towns.⁸³ This might appear as reputable to an institution of higher education as a fun fair is to the higher arts, but it took their education out of the city into the countryside. Their choice of addressees was likewise highly effective, since they acted as multipliers who could transmit Spahn's principles. After ten years and fifty-six courses, many of them led by Martin Spahn himself, more than three thousand people had attended the courses of the *Kolleg*, foremost academics, primary teachers and farmers.⁸⁴

Spahn was also keen to maintain a close relationship between the *Kolleg*, the *Deutsche Hochschulring*⁸⁵ and the *Ring deutscher Katholiken*. Together with Herrmann von Lüninck and the *Jungdeutsche Orden*, Spahn founded the *Ring* in 1924 to be a melting pot for 'right leaning Catholics in support of a conservative, Greater German state'.⁸⁶ Supported by the NCC and the *Politische Kolleg*, it addressed mainly academic organisations in Berlin and northern Germany. The *Ring* stood for devotion to the German people and fatherland, the foundation of a corporate state and the formation of a strong 'front line against the anti-Christian and

⁸³ Lecture schedules for national-political courses. BAK, N1324, 54. Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, p. 156.

⁸⁴ BAK, N1324, 54. Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, p. 156. The general number of students certainly looks small, but compared to today's admission of about 100 new undergraduates to each London college every year, the *Politische Kolleg* did quite well with (on average) 300 students per year.

⁸⁵ Minutes of the negotiations on the creation of a German-nationalist Catholic student union, the *Ring deutscher Katholiken*. BAK, N1324, 185. Present were among others Martin Spahn, Hermann von Lüninck who had just become member of the NCC and Dr Lorenz Pieper, priest, member of the *Stahlhelm*, *Jungdeutsche Orden* and brother of August Pieper of the *Volksverein*. Spahn also petitioned for the *Hochschulring's* interests with BVP politicians. Letter Spahn to Held, 19.5.1926. BayHStA, NL Held 903.

⁸⁶ Letter Bärwolff (DNVP) to Max Buchner, 29.1.1926. BAK, N1088, 68. On the *Ring* see Vogel: *Nationale Kampfverbände*, p. 138. Founded in 1919, the *Jungdeutsche Orden* was another paramilitary organisation with a nationalist, anti-democratic and antisemitic worldview. Some of its members also participated in the Hitler Putsch in 1923. The *Jungdeutsche Orden* eventually merged with the liberal German Democratic Party in 1930. This has often been interpreted as a commitment by the *Jungdeutsche Orden* to a 'more perfect form of democracy called Volksstaat'. Larry Jones: 'Generational Conflict and the Problem of Political Mobilisation in the Weimar Republic', in: *Elections. Mass Politics and Social Change in Modern Germany. New Perspectives*, ed. by L. Jones, James Retallack, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 347-69, (p. 361). Yet Vogel has cautioned that the *Orden's* nationalist and antisemitic outlook remained the same. Vogel: *Nationale Kampfverbände*, p. 24. The foundation of the German State Party (Deutsche Staatspartei) was essentially a pragmatic alliance to gain more electoral support and does as such not prove a democratic conviction.

anti-national left'.⁸⁷ As in the other satellite organisations, antisemitism was central to the *Ring*. Spahn had advised the student organisation that antisemitism was absolutely necessary if they wanted to succeed in the resurrection of religious life and a wholehearted devotion to the state.⁸⁸

3.1.1.3 Activities of the Rechtskatholiken

Considering the political approach of the *Rechtskatholiken*, it is not surprising that most members of the NCC spent their time in public relations to support their cause. Their worldview was in evidence whenever they were present at political debates and lectures, in numerous articles in various newspapers and journals, and in their pamphlets and petitions. The NCC alone published three newsbulletins, the *Katholisches Korrespondenzblatt* (since 1921), and since the early 1930s the *Katholische Führerbriefe. Mitteilungsblatt für rechtsstehende Katholiken*. The *Ring deutscher Katholiken* published the newspaper *Das Deutsche Volk* and the conservative newspaper *Rheinische Merkur* had promised its support to the right's cause.⁸⁹ Prominent members of the group also published in other conservative or nationalist newspapers, such as *Deutsche Arbeit*, the *Süddeutschen Monatshefte*, the DNVP's *Der Tag* or the *Völkische Beobachter*.⁹⁰ Most important was, however, their journal, *Gelben Hefte*, successor to the *Historisch-Politischen Blätter*, with its principles, 'Catholic, patriotic (*vaterländisch*), conservative'.⁹¹ Considering Max Buchner's worldview it is unsurprising that the *Gelben Hefte* maintained a nationalist, anti-democratic and antisemitic tenor. Unlike the *Führerbriefe*, the

⁸⁷ 'Richtlinien. Programm des Ring deutscher Katholiken', BAK, N1324, 185. 'The front line' also included the strongest opposition to the Centre Party. The *Ring's* medium was *Das Deutsche Volk* advocating the benefits of a strong leader and denouncing democracy, albeit in a subtle way. While the *Ring* soon lost in importance, *Das Deutsche Volk* became very popular especially in Prussia among academics, the nobility, military, clergy. *Das Deutsche Volk* was launched in 1925 and initially only had a limited resonance. By 1933, the paper was edited by Dr Wilhelm Reinermann, who gained his journalistic skills whilst writing for Eberle's Christian-social, antisemitic *Schönere Zukunft*. Reinermann was also secretary of the Association of Catholic Journeymen (*Kolpingsverein*). Vogel: *Nationale Kampfverbände*, p. 145.

⁸⁸ Letter Spahn to *Ring deutscher Katholiken*, 2.2.1925. BAK, N1324, 185.

⁸⁹ For the support of the *Rheinische Merkur* see minutes of the constituent meeting of NCC, 10.8.1920. WLV, Akten RKA.

⁹⁰ The latter two were the platform where the fewest restrictions were applied to antisemitic sentiments. E.g., Friedrich von Schorlemer's article in the *Völkische Beobachter*. BAOS, 04-61-00-7.

⁹¹ Buchner's programme for the *Gelben Hefte* announced at the initial meeting on 3 June 1924. BAK, N1088, Nr 18, 128 respectively.

Gelben Hefte was not an internal newsbulletin but gave the group the desired exposure and sought to bridge the right with a wider audience.

The *Gelben Hefte* developed over the years into a platform shared by *Rechtskatholiken*, aristocrats, clerics, theologians (some of them like Joseph Roth – who was later in charge of the Catholic section of the Ministry of Church Affairs – with clear sympathies for the National Socialist movement⁹²) and Catholic figures in public life. Among the more prominent contributors were the Munich historians Alois Meister and Karl Alexander v. Müller,⁹³ the Franciscan scholar Eberhard Schlund⁹⁴, and the Bavarian monarchist Erwein Freiherr von Aretin. Ludwig Freiherr von Gebsattel also contributed various *völkisch* antisemitic articles.⁹⁵ Max Buchner even managed to interest papal nuncio Eugenio Pacelli in the *Gelben Hefte*, and elicited the approval of the Jesuit *Die Stimmen der Zeit*.⁹⁶

A central theme of the Catholic right's publications was to oppose the claim of the Centre Party of being the sole political representative of Catholic interests. The *Rechtskatholiken* contested this claim by publicly denouncing the party as unpatriotic

⁹² Roman Bleistein, SJ: 'Überläufer im Sold der Kirchenfeinde: Joseph Roth und Albert Hartl, Priesterkarrieren im Dritten Reich', *Beiträge zur altbayerischen Kirchengeschichte*, 42 (1996), 71-111.

⁹³ For Müller's nationalist and antisemitic worldview and his willing co-operation with National Socialism see Herde: 'Max Buchner', pp. 47-53. Müller (born 1882) was Professor of medieval, modern and Bavarian history at the University of Munich from 1928. He made early and lasting personal contact with Hitler, participated in the Hitler putsch 1923 and joined the NSDAP in August 1933. In 1936, he became director of the research department on the 'Jewish question' in the *Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*. From 1935, Müller was also editor of the *Historische Zeitschrift*. One of his students, who apparently followed Müller's lectures with enthusiasm, was the Bavarian politician Franz Josef Strauss.

⁹⁴ Schlund was lector at the Franciscan School for Philosophy and Theology in Munich and published a number of essays on the relationship between National Socialism and Catholicism. He repeatedly described the aims of National Socialism as anti-Christian, including the movement's antisemitism. Schlund acknowledged at the same time that National Socialism stood against the 'right enemies'. He also agreed with antisemites on the allegedly destructive influence of Jewry on morality, culture, and society, and the Jews' greed. He perceived them as racially alien, though he did not condone their persecution on the basis of their foreignness. Hermann Greive has justifiably summarised Schlund's criticism of National Socialist antisemitism as a critique of the extreme rather than of Jew-hatred. Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, pp. 61-65. Other historians, like Rudolf Lill, have failed to see this ambiguity in Schlund's work and cite the Franciscan as clear opponent of National Socialism and racism. Lill: 'Deutsche Katholiken', pp. 409-11.

⁹⁵ See, e.g., *GH* 1 (1924), p. 409, cited in Herde: 'Max Buchner', p. 13. Von Gebsattel, 'second man' of the Pan-German League after the war, led the *völkisch*, antisemitic German National Defensive and Combat League (*Deutschvölkischer Schutz- u. Trutz Bund*, DNSTB) until Alfred Roth took over. Möller: *Modern Antisemitismus*, p. 179.

⁹⁶ Buchner had sent several issues of the *Gelben Hefte* and some of his own books to Pacelli. BAK, N1088, 118. Herde: 'Max Buchner', pp. 205-206.

for collaborating with socialists and communists. In their petitions to the hierarchy, they asked for a clear separation of church and state, which meant that the bishops and clergy should no longer support or recommend the Centre as sole representative of Catholic opinion. Furthermore, the bishops were repeatedly asked to lift their ban on the *Stahlhelm* and to encourage Catholics to join such patriotic organisations (*vaterländische Vereinigungen*).⁹⁷ In matters of political day-to-day routine the NCC and its satellites supported DNVP politics. Their publications joined the DNVP in their opposition to Chancellor Josef Wirth (Centre Party) in 1922 because of his clear condemnation of the nationalist right after the murder of Walther Rathenau in June. Leaflets of the NCC denounced Wirth for being too democratic and Jew-friendly for the taste of the Catholic right.⁹⁸ The NCC also supported the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag because it was believed to have a large Jewish influence.⁹⁹

3.1.2 Public Responses. A Success Story of the Rechtskatholiken?

The National Catholic Council and its satellite organisation, as well as likeminded Westphalian, Silesian and Bavarian aristocrats were certainly very busy and determined to draw more people to their cause, but their influence on mass politics remained in the end limited. For years, the *Gelben Hefte* struggled financially. Even after its finances were stable from 1932 onwards, the *Hefte's* readership was fairly modest, never exceeding a circulation of 2,000.¹⁰⁰ The *Politische Kolleg* barely survived until 1933 on ever diminishing resources.¹⁰¹ And the *Ring deutscher Katholiken* had turned into yet another right-wing student organisation. The Catholic inroads the NCC hoped to carve into the DNVP remained mere faint paths in 1931. Historians have estimated that between six and twelve per cent of the Catholic vote went to the DNVP.¹⁰² Moreover, internal disputes with the DNVP leadership under

⁹⁷ It was particularly Bishops Klein of Paderborn, Berning of Osnabrück and Bertram of Breslau who were repeatedly addressed by *Rechtskatholiken*.

⁹⁸ Draft leaflet 'Osteraufruf', (n. d.). BAK, N1324, 177.

⁹⁹ Leaflet 'Aufruf rechtsgerichteter Katholiken zum Volksbegehren: An die katholischen Deutschen in Preußen!' And Minutes Meeting, 16.3.1931. BAK, N1324, 177.

¹⁰⁰ Weiss: 'Katholischer Konservatismus', pp. 108-109.

¹⁰¹ It was still funded by Hugenberg, but also by Fritz Springoru and Ernst Brandi. Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, p. 168.

¹⁰² Ibidem, p. 173. Gründer: 'Rechtskatholiken', p. 146.

Alfred Hugenberg left the NCC in a marginal position within the party.¹⁰³ The exodus of a number of *Rechtskatholiken*, amongst them Paul Lejeune-Jung, in reaction to the DNVP's rejection of the Prussian Concordat in 1929 was a sign of the political failure of the National Catholic Council.¹⁰⁴

However, since most organisations of the Catholic right mentioned above deliberately focused their activities on the dissemination of a Christian-nationalist worldview and lobbying rather than on party politics, the success of the *Rechtskatholiken* must not be measured in their numerical strength or their politics alone. Their importance lies in the repercussions they caused in the middle parties, in particular within the organisational network of the Centre Party. If they had managed to gain access to these organisations, they would have been able to espouse their ideology on an altogether different scale. If the success of the *Rechtskatholiken* is primarily judged on their ability to attract Catholics to their ideas, even the NCC had achieved two of its three main objectives by 1932, namely to gather more followers to their cause and to move closer to mainstream Catholicism. The recruitment to the German-nationalist fold was particularly successful among Catholic academics and students.¹⁰⁵ The Council was encouraged even further through the explicit support of Abbot Ildefons Herwegen of Maria Laach, an invitation by Bishop Berning of Osnabrück, a promise to address their interests at the bishops' conference in Fulda and the sympathetic ear of *Generalvikar* Rosenberg in Paderborn.¹⁰⁶ In a letter to Martin Spahn in 1924, a Dr Möller reported on his meeting with *Generalvikar* Rosenberg that he had 'met with the *Generalvikar*'s complete sympathy for the struggle against Jewish influence which also affects the Centre press today [...] In this struggle the JO [*Jungdeutsche Orden*] stands out bravely and openly and represents therein a great Christian interest in the tradition of many Christian-Catholic pioneers.'¹⁰⁷ By 1932 the *Rechtskatholiken* eventually managed to soften

¹⁰³ The National Council's relation with the party came under considerable strain during Hugenberg's leadership. Catholic interests, according to the Council, were generally insufficiently respected by the DNVP, as not enough Catholics were among the party's leadership, nor were adequate numbers of Catholic DNVP candidates running for elections. Minutes NCC Meeting 10.3.1929. BAK, N1324, 177. Gründer: 'Rechtskatholiken', p. 147.

¹⁰⁴ Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, p. 177. Gründer: 'Rechtskatholiken', p. 146.

¹⁰⁵ Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, p. 173.

¹⁰⁶ Letter von Lüninck to Buchner, 25.7.1931. BAK, N1088, 19.

¹⁰⁷ Letter Dr Möller to Martin Spahn, 14.11.1924. BAK, N1324, 177.

the resistance of some Catholic organisations traditionally close to the Centre Party, when DNVP Catholics were invited as speakers to the *Katholikentag*.¹⁰⁸

Political Catholicism went to considerable lengths to keep their youth on board, as nationalist outlook became increasingly popular among the youth and especially academic and student organisations of German Catholicism.¹⁰⁹ In this respect, Catholics were no exception to the general trend. Reports of Catholic organisations on the political activities and reading habits of their communities are a useful mirror reflecting public mood at the time. In the diocese of Paderborn, the reactions of many Catholic individuals to German-nationalist Catholics and their activities were positive, as documented in their letters sent to the bishop. Some of these responses also show that supporters identified with the *Rechtskatholiken* through their mutual antisemitism and anti-socialism.¹¹⁰ Yet Catholic sympathies for nationalist organisations were also observed outside the borders of the Paderborn diocese. Throughout the Weimar Republic members of the Centre Party or the *Volksverein* filed anxious reports on a Catholic public that seemed to move away from their traditional centre. Msgr Brem, *Volksverein* secretary for Bavaria, noted in autumn 1921 that educated Catholics turned to conservative journals such as the *Historisch-Politischen Blätter* or Eberle's *Das Neue Reich*, because the *Volksverein* did not satisfy their interest in cultural philosophy, i.e., all matters concerning German identity (*Deutschtum* and *Volkstum*).¹¹¹ The popularity of nationalist thought and the

¹⁰⁸ Six *Rechtskatholiken* were invited to the preparations of the *Katholikentag* to discuss civic topics and problems, among them Dr. Doms, Ratibor; Dr. Pietsch, Berlin; Dr. Glasebock, Krefeld; a Mr Forsbach, attorney, Dortmund; Prince von Hohenzollern-Namedy; Frhr von Lüninck, Bonn. The workshop was chaired by Emil Ritter. It was a partial victory as the speakers at the bigger public assemblies were still exclusively Centre or BVP and the Central Committee of the *Katholikentag* management showed likewise no *Rechtskatholiken* on its benches. *Katholische Führerbriefe*, 1 (September 1932), p. 6. Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, p. 173.

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., lecture Bishop Berning, 'Radikale Strömungen bei der studierenden Jugend', Fulda, 1931. BAOS, 04-61-00-11. Or former BVP councillor of Bad Kissingen, Messerschmidt to secretariat Bishop Berning, (n.d.). BAOS, 04-61-00-7. The attraction of National Socialism among young farmers was also confirmed by Bavarian police reports. 'Auszug aus dem Halbmonatsbericht des Regierungs-Präsidiums von Oberbayern', 4.11.1931, Nr 2265. BayHStA, MInn 73734 Rechtsradikale Agitation der Bauernschaft. The journal of the *Windhorstbund* youth organisation (*Das Junge Zentrum*) spoke out in support of the *Jungdeutsche Orden*. It praised the *Orden's* patriotic services as para-military organisation and connected with the *Orden* in their love for German nationalist literature. *Das Junge Zentrum. Organ des Windhorstbundes*, 1928. BAK, ZSG 1, 108/5. Hürten: *Kurze Geschichte*, pp. 193-94, p. 200. For the popularity of the *Jungdeutsche Orden* among Catholic youth, students and academics from the 1920s see Vogel: *Nationale Kampfverbände*, p. 44.

¹¹⁰ Erzbistumsarchiv Paderborn (EBAP), XVIII, 23 Vaterländische Verbände.

¹¹¹ Notes of Msgr Brem, (*Landessekretär, Geistlicher Rat*), 23.9.1921. BA, R8115I / 125 Volksverein. Tätigkeit Bayern.

considerable Catholic sympathies for the early National Socialist movement has been demonstrated cogently by Derek Hastings. This Catholic engagement in the early NSDAP reached a high point in 1923, but rapidly dissolved in early 1924 in response to the passionate anti-Catholicism of Erich Ludendorff and Alfred Rosenberg and the *völkisch* attacks on Cardinal Faulhaber after the failed Hitler putsch in November 1923.¹¹² An attraction to nationalist ideology and organisations remained, however, despite the rejection of the NSDAP. Hastings has found that Catholic defectors of the *völkisch* bloc hardly returned to the BVP but opted for the DNVP instead. The latter had become more attractive to these Catholics because of the energetic campaign of its Catholic Council and the prominence of Martin Spahn therein.¹¹³ These persisting sympathies for the conservative right were still lamented by the *Volksverein* in 1925. A conference of the Bavarian *Volksverein* recorded that the division between Catholics loyal to the Centre and those leaning towards nationalist organisations was particularly strong in Bavaria and hindered the *Volksverein's* work.¹¹⁴

On the western borders of the Republic the *Stahlhelm Landesverband Westmark* was winning Catholic support for the *Stahlhelm's* referendum on the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag in summer 1931 as reported by Dr Kohlen, a speaker for the *Volksverein*.¹¹⁵ Kohlen described a remarkable success of right-wing organisations in Catholic areas, noticeably around Trier and Koblenz, where the support for the *Stahlhelm* had risen from 9,687 to over 140,000 votes. Breslau, Lower and Upper Silesia, the left-bank lower Rhine region and the Hunsrück were similarly reported to be receptive to *völkisch* propaganda. Kohlen did not see the reason for this rebellion in mere party-politicking by Centre voters, but thought that their alienation was more fundamental, that ordinary Catholics had refused their support for 'ideological

¹¹² Hastings: 'How Catholic', pp. 401-31.

¹¹³ Ibidem, p. 428, fn. 137.

¹¹⁴ Minutes meeting Bavarian *Volksverein*, 12.4.1925. BA, R8115I / 125, 232. The priest of the parish of St Paul in Passau found many NSDAP members in his parish, even in 'religious families' and his colleague at St Stephan's complained that National Socialism had a 'degenerating influence' on his pastoral work. For St Stephan see questionnaire 1931, for St Paul see questionnaire 1932. ABP, OA Deka Passau Stadt 9II, Seelsorgeberichte der Priester.

¹¹⁵ The *Stahlhelm Landesverband Westmark* was founded in summer 1930 to replace the dissolved *Stahlhelm Industriegebiet und Rheinland*. The decision to run a referendum on the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag was made by the *Stahlhelm* in October 1930, and officially applied for in February 1931. Joachim Tautz: *Militärische Jugendpolitik in der Weimarer Republik. Die Jugendorganisation des Stahlhelm, Bund der Frontsoldaten: Jungstahlhelm und Scharnhorst, Bund deutscher Jungmannen*, Regensburg, 1998, p. 422, fn. 225.

reasons'.¹¹⁶ Josef Wrede (*Volksverein* secretary in Berlin), writing from the perspective of the metropolis, saw less drama in these events.¹¹⁷ Yet he also blamed the inertia of the Centre Party and the clergy in facing the social question. He thought that the *Volksverein*, too, was too aloof and intellectual in its campaigns, while the radicals oozed activism, and visited the remotest villages.¹¹⁸

A growing polarisation of the Catholic community was also reflected in election results and changing political allegiance. The *völkisch* coalition gained remarkable results in the Bavarian Landtag election on 6 April 1924 in Catholic regions.¹¹⁹ Catholic discontent with its traditional political representative became even more obvious in the Reichstag election in May 1928, when the Centre Party sank to 12.1%, its worst result ever.¹²⁰ In the September 1930 Reichstag election, the Centre lost another 0.3% of their votes (achieving 11.8%), while the NSDAP soared from 2.6% to 18.3%. It has often been stated that by and large Catholics did not vote NSDAP. This is certainly correct on the level of Reichstag elections, but this observation fails to detect fluctuations in the Catholic electorate or its attraction to *völkisch* groups other than the NSDAP. In the heated atmosphere of 1931 and 1932, results of Landtag elections and referenda suggest that political allegiance became more and more polarised, even in Catholic regions. In Passau, for example, Catholics divided their vote almost equally between the NSDAP and BVP, while the Social-Democrats and Communists were left far behind. The BVP was indeed often only marginally ahead of the NSDAP. A fair example here is Ilzstadt, where 232 people voted NSDAP, 235 BVP and only 87 and 79 inhabitants voted SPD and KPD

¹¹⁶ Letter Dr Kohlen to Josef Wrede, *Volksverein*, Berlin, 1.6.1931. BA, R8115I / 90 *Volksverein. Tätigkeit Berlin*.

¹¹⁷ Letter Wrede to Dr Kohlen, 18.6.1931. BA, R8115I / 90.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁹ In Munich the bloc gained 34.9%, the largest total of any single party, but was in decline from then on. Hastings: 'How Catholic', p. 428. In Würzburg the bloc managed to poll only half of the Munich votes, 17.1%. Roland Flade: *Die Würzburger Juden. Ihre Geschichte vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, 2nd edn, Würzburg, 1996, p. 243.

¹²⁰ This meant a loss of 3.8% of the votes since the first elections in 1919, but only minus 1.5% since the December elections in 1924. Jürgen Falter, Thomas Lindenberger, Siegfried Schumann: *Wahlen und Abstimmungen in der Weimarer Republic*, Munich, 1986, p. 44.

respectively.¹²¹ In the parish of St Josef in Auerbach the BVP was even outnumbered by the NSDAP with 170 against 240 votes.¹²²

The opinion of ordinary Catholics, where documented, confirms the observations of the *Volksverein* mentioned before. In the critical years 1931/32, the Centre's previous collaboration with the SPD and the perceived threat of Bolshevism often convinced individual Catholics that their interests were best served by nationalist parties.¹²³ Again, the right's antisemitism was not just tolerated, it often seemed to have been part of their attraction – a good example is a Kiel factory director. Furious at the criticism of National Socialism by the local priest, he complained in April 1932 to Bishop Berning that

Hindenburg was promoted by the anti-clerical Social Democracy, the Jews of the democratic parties whose ancestors had crucified Christ, and the Catholic Centre. [...] Hitler is the candidate of all national and truly social-minded Germans including many loyal Catholics.¹²⁴

He continued, saying that if only pater Eichholz had read *Mein Kampf* he would have known that Hitler guaranteed the protection of the Christian denominations.¹²⁵

3.1.3 *The Hierarchy, Political Catholicism and Radicalism*

Catholic bishops and the representatives of political Catholicism were keen to examine the reasons behind the attraction of sections of the Catholic community to *völkisch* organisations. The structural shortcomings of political Catholicism were

¹²¹ Questionnaire 1931. The BVP's position was a little better in the parish of St Stephan: 974 BVP against 645 NSDAP and 93 DNVP, 89 KPD, 280 SPD. ABP, OA Deka Passau Stadt 9II.

¹²² In the following year, 1932, the BVP managed to regain their votes and left the NSDAP in second place by a margin of 26 votes (+116 votes for the BVP and +20 for the NSDAP). Questionnaire 1931 and 1932. Ibidem.

¹²³ For letters in support of the *Stahlhelm*, *Jungdeutsche Orden* and the *Rechtskatholiken* see EBAP, XVIII, 23 Vaterländische Verbände. Also, e.g., letter Kommerzienrat Carl Bödiker, Prussian *Generalkonsul*, Hamburg to Berning, 29.11.1932. BAOS, 04-61-00-7. Wilhelm Hübsch, Mühlheim-Ruhr, to Konrad Algermissen (*Volksverein*), 19.9.1931. StadtAMG, Nachlass Algermissen 15/7/1. The mayor of Renchen in Baden confessed that he had joined the NSDAP, despite being a devote Catholic, in order to fight communism more effectively. Letter Dr Rudolf Eglau to Archbishop Gröber, Freiburg, 14.7.1933. EAF, B2-48-5, 4. Others supported the NSDAP, hoping for a unification of the Christian Churches under Hitler, e.g., letter Alois Brücker, Köln-Stammheim, to Cologne Archdiocese, April 1933. EAK, Gen 22.12, 1.

¹²⁴ Letter Dr phil W. Rudolph, Kiel, to Bishop Berning, 14.4.1932. BAOS, 04-62-32.

¹²⁵ Ibidem.

often criticised, including its lethargic political campaigns and its thin presence in rural areas, all of which compared unfavourably with the activism of *völkisch* organisations. But writing in March 1933, Konrad Algermissen of the *Volksverein* brought up another reason.¹²⁶ Algermissen felt that the bishops had failed to contain National Socialism, and that as a result ‘the majority of the still devout population will join the National Socialist movement not just superficially but will be infected by its ideology’.¹²⁷ Algermissen’s statement came with the wisdom of hindsight, but referred to an aspect that should not be underestimated in Catholic susceptibility to the right, namely the persuasiveness of some aspects of *völkisch* ideology. Indeed even before Algermissen’s criticism, Catholic spokespersons, like Dr Kohlen of the *Volksverein*, had warned of the influence of *völkisch* ideology. In a communication with the German bishops in 1924, Cardinal Schulte of Cologne, too, suggested that young Catholics were attracted to patriotic associations because of an urge for national unity, and the perceived problematic relationship between Catholicism and Germandom. Schulte explained this attraction by pointing out the overlap between the aims of some patriotic associations (the *Jungdeutsche Orden*) and the papal encyclicals, and the endorsement these organisations received by Catholic priests.¹²⁸ Algermissen and Cardinal Schulte essentially suggested that the German Catholic milieu and its worldview did not render Catholics immune to *völkisch* ideology and antisemitism.¹²⁹ In order to trace possible correlations between the two worldviews, the following section describes the use and nature of antisemitism within the two Catholic parties between 1918 and 1924, the same period of time when the *Rechtskatholiken* began to organise their network. This is followed by a brief overview of Catholic responses to *Rechtskatholiken* and *völkisch* organisations in general from 1924. Both parts aim to place the Catholic right in a context with

¹²⁶ Konrad Algermissen wrote on the disappointment of many Catholics at the bishops’ latest, rather conciliatory declaration on National Socialism. It was interpreted as the ‘retreat of the Church’. Algermissen to Cardinal Bertram, 31.3.1933, p. 4. StadtAMG, 15/7/1.

¹²⁷ Ibidem, pp. 3–4. Contemporaries – priests and lay – were aware of this imbalance and thought that the German hierarchy was underestimating the dangers of extreme right-wing movements, a concern that was duly brought to the attention of the bishops. E.g., letter Josef Specker, SJ, of the Workshop of Men’s Religious Orders in Cologne (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kölner Männerkongregationen*) to Bishop Berning, 25.6.1931. BAOS, 04-61-00-20/21. Or letter Schreiber (member of clergy’s conference, Münster) to Cardinal Bertram, 17.7.1932, asking Bertram for more instruction to the clergy on how to warn against National Socialism. Schreiber also criticised the lack of proclamations against the movement coming from the pulpits. EAK, Gen 22.13, 1.

¹²⁸ Bertram to bishops at Fulda conference, 24.1.1924. EAK, Gen 23.11, 2.

¹²⁹ As claimed by Lill: ‘Deutsche Katholiken’, p. 390-92.

political (or mainstream) Catholicism and to indicate points of contact between the two.

In many histories of Weimar Germany the Centre Party is remembered as a member of the group of liberal parties that held out against right-wing radicalism and antisemitism. Indeed, Centre Party members were not without reason denounced as 'Jew-friends' by the radical right. From 1924 the party softened its antisemitic rhetoric in their major publications, and spoke out against antisemitism in parliament and in public. A small number of Centre Party politicians worked alongside Jews and democrats for the Association in Defence against Antisemitism. The Berlin branch of the party eventually listed a Jew, Georg Kareski, as its candidate for the 1930 Reichstag elections.¹³⁰ Because of its defence of Jewish civic equality and religious freedom, Rudolf Lill describes the Centre Party together with the SPD as the strongest force against antisemitism in the *Kaiserreich* and Weimar Germany.¹³¹ Lill is not unaware of economic and religious prejudices against Jews within the Centre, but tends to play down their importance in comparison with the Centre's rejection of racial antisemitism. Yet looking at the Centre Party and antisemitism it is necessary to bear in mind three aspects. First, the term antisemitism at the time was almost exclusively restricted to the violent racial Jew-hatred of the radical right, whose philosophy also included a vehement anti-clericalism. Opposing *völkisch* antisemitism was therefore also a measure of self-defence. Second, the Centre's traditional tolerance towards Jews was primarily part of their religious policy that guaranteed religious freedom and said little about its tolerance of Jewish influence in German economy and society. Unlike Lill, Olaf Blaschke, David Blackbourn and Hermann Greive place far more emphasis on the obvious ambivalence of the party's attitude towards Jews and the political reasoning behind its anti-antisemitism. It was after all not wise for high-ranking representatives of one religious minority to call for legal restrictions to be placed on another religious minority.¹³² Finally, the Centre's record in defence of German Jewry is commendable (though not outstanding), but it only set in after Hitler's failed coup in November 1923, when the Centre Party, like the SPD and the liberal parties, recognised *völkisch* antisemitism as a threat to the

¹³⁰ On the Centre's anti-antisemitism in its parliamentary work see Mazura: *Zentrumspartei und Judenfrage*, Mainz, 1994. For the Centre's work beyond parliament see Lill: 'Deutschen Katholiken', pp. 396-411. Berding: *Moderner Antisemitismus*, p. 217.

¹³¹ Lill: 'Deutsche Katholiken', p. 398.

¹³² Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 87. On the functions of Catholic defence of Jewish rights during the *Kaiserreich* see Blaschke: *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus*, pp. 226-49.

democratic political system. Immediately after the war, however, and up to 1924, economic and cultural antisemitism was evident in Centre Party election campaign and within the leadership of the party. The latter was particularly obvious in the negotiations to the new party programme (1918-1920).

The initiative for a new party programme emerged from Cologne and Berlin almost simultaneously in November 1918. Both largely conserved the principles of the old Centre and envisaged the new party as an inter-denominational and democratic party. The main difference between the two lay in the proposed social and cultural policies, which were more progressive in character in the Cologne draft.¹³³ The Berlin draft programme was set up by Matthias Erzberger, then Centre representative in the provisional Reich government, Maximilian Pfeiffer, the General Secretary of the Berlin Centre Party, and the Catholic theologian and publicist Carl Sonnenschein. Pfeiffer claimed that it represented 'the spirit from which the [Centre] programme was born'.¹³⁴ Indeed, the Berlin draft was later adopted by the Centre Party in Westphalia as a useful blueprint for a future party programme.¹³⁵ In December 1918, this draft was published under Pfeiffer's authorship and not only revealed the author's prejudices against Jews but also a fascination with German *Volkstum*:

German and Christian is the principle of our nature (*Wesen*). The Germanic tribes rose from the depths of centuries. From early times their tribe's characteristic merged with the Christian cultural element. This holy bond between Germandom and Christendom blessed the German people's wonderful gift throughout the centuries. Abandoning one or the other has brought danger again and again and has led us close to the abyss. [...] We ourselves will be healed through this German nature from morbid delusion (*krankhafter Verirrung*). We condemn and reject bringing in alien manners to our country's thinking, senses, striving, behaviour, into its civic and social life – may these alien manners come from the west or the east or from certain culturally decomposing elements of Jewry. We will not allow the core of German nature (*kernhaft deutsche Art*) to be falsified by 'new thoughts and ideals' of revolutionary governments of a Russian kind.¹³⁶

Almost exactly two years later, a confidential first draft of the Centre's intended policies reflected the draft programme's *völkisch* concept of a German nation when it claimed that the nation's unity was based on a community of blood and common fate

¹³³ Morsey: *Zentrumspartei*, p. 106.

¹³⁴ Maximilian Pfeiffer: *Das neue Zentrum und die politische Neuordnung. Ein Programm*, Berlin, 1918. Pfeiffer was general secretary of the Centre Party in Berlin from November 1918-1920.

¹³⁵ Morsey: *Zentrumspartei*, p. 106.

¹³⁶ Pfeiffer: *Das neue Zentrum*, pp. 62-63. Greive suggests that such a *völkisch* outlook was not new to German Catholicism since the end of the war but increasingly became the basis for social and civic theories. Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 100.

(*Blutsgemeinschaft und Schicksalsverbundenheit*) of the German tribes.’¹³⁷ The antisemitism of the earlier draft was, however, coded as anti-alienism when the 1920 draft suggested the immediate expulsion of ‘alien revolutionaries’. Yet these Centre guidelines were drafted at the same time the DNVP and the *völkisch* right had whipped up a hostile campaign against Eastern European Jews.¹³⁸ Considering the contemporary context and recalling the tone of Pfeiffer’s booklet it was not difficult to recognise that the term ‘alien revolutionaries’ most likely referred to Eastern European or Russian Jews.

These images did not remain buried in early draft versions of the Centre programme. They were stable elements in election campaigns of both Catholic parties up to 1924. Election posters, leaflets and pamphlets pictured the Jew as Bolshevik revolutionary, as traitor to the fatherland, as profiteer or immoral pressbaron undermining Christendom and Germandom.¹³⁹ With the help of these media, antisemitism gained a new dynamic. Enriched with caricatures and bold layouts their message was unambiguous and thanks to the format (leaflets, posters) more widely available. Antisemitism in these campaigns was often a means to discredit the political rivals of the Catholic parties by accusing them of Jewish support. The parties of the right were usually ridiculed by claims that – despite their own antisemitism – they still supported individual Jews whenever it suited their purposes. The ‘old enemies’, on the other hand, social democracy and liberalism (*Deutsche Demokratische Partei*), were often described as ‘Jewish’ parties:

Who is the German Democratic Party? It is the Mosse Party, the party of the Jewish-liberal *Berliner Tageblatt* that represents the interests of the stock market and capital (*Grosskapital*), but not the interests of the Christian people. It is the party whose press cheered when France's atheistic rulers opened their struggle against the Christian Churches, and removed religion and the crucifixes from schools; [...] no vote for the

¹³⁷ For this and the following quotes see ‘Streng vertraulich! Erster Entwurf der neuen Richtlinien der Zentrumsparlei für die Kommissionsberatung am 15.12.1920’, BA, R8115 I / 180 Zentrum.

¹³⁸ Walter: *Antisemitische Kriminalität*, pp. 60-61.

¹³⁹ See, e.g., the flyer of the Centre organisation Christian-Democratic Soldiers Alliance (26.1.1919, election to the Prussian *Landesversammlung*) addressing the returning soldiers: ‘Comrades! We protest energetically against the audacity to welcome us soldiers at the Brandenburg Gate by people who have managed to accept 20 million marks from Russian Jews to purchase weapons and ammunition! These weapons would have been directed against us, had we dared to bring peace and order to our Heimat!’, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischen Kulturgutes (GStA PK), IV, Nr 108.

anti-religious and anti-clerical social democracy, but equally no vote for the party of liberal Jewry – the German Democratic People's Party.¹⁴⁰ As in the case of Catholic print media, such attacks against Jews were most frequent in the years right after the war and the revolutions until 1923/24. By then antisemitism had lost its attractiveness in political campaigns. At that time the public witnessed a re-emergence of *Radauantisemitismus* in the form of desecration of Jewish cemeteries and synagogues, which it rejected as disgraceful and uncivilised.¹⁴¹

The BVP is known as the more antisemitic of the two Catholic parties, whose rhetoric was hardly distinguishable from the antisemitic abuse of *völkisch* organisations. It is even better known for the leniency shown towards the *völkisch* movement that provided a safe haven for anti-democratic, antisemitic organisations during the Weimar Republic. A shortened version of the BVP programme summarised the party's attitude towards Jews succinctly. The text confirmed that 'the Bavarian People's Party respects every honest Jew':

but we have to fight the numerous atheistic elements of a certain international Jewry of Eastern European colour, who have in a shameful manner influenced our economy during the war and have seized hold of the Reich's government and that of single federal states through a military revolt. [...] No sensible Jew can expect that 65 million Germans and almost 7 million Bavarians were to be governed by these decomposing elements.¹⁴²

These 'atheistic elements', according to the programme, were responsible for profiteering and betrayed the German army through revolution.¹⁴³

The BVP was the strongest party in Bavaria after the elections to the Bavarian *Landtag* and national assembly in January 1919. It participated in every Bavarian government until its demise in 1933 and many of its policies showed more tolerance towards antisemitism than towards Jews. There was, for instance, the campaign against Eastern European Jews (*Ostjudenfrage*) that resulted in their planned

¹⁴⁰ Leaflet in support of the Prussian Centre Party, election to the 1919 National Assembly: 'Christlich Männer! Christliche Frauen!'. It was issued by the *Christliche Volkspartei* which ran in support of the Prussian Centre. GStA PK, XII, IV, Nr. 107. See also the Centre Party leaflet on the German Democratic Party 'Voters in Prussia!' Flyer of the Centre Party, election to the Prussian *Landtag*, 20.2.1921. GStA PK, XII, IV, Nr. 109.

¹⁴¹ Walter: *Antisemitische Kriminalität*, p. 21.

¹⁴² 'Bayerisch Volkspartei und das Judentum', in BBP leaflet 'Was ist und was will die Bayerische Volkspartei?', Munich, 1919. BAK, ZSG 1 8/3 Veröffentlichungen der BVP 1919-32.

¹⁴³ Ibidem.

expulsion in 1923/24 and the leniency of the Bavarian administration towards SA violence against Jews in the month before the Hitler Putsch in November 1923.¹⁴⁴ Dirk Walter, who wrote about violent antisemitism in Weimar Germany, does not comment on how BVP newspapers covered the *Ostjudenfrage* in early 1920, but he stresses that papers like the *Bayerische Volkskurier* avoided antisemitic slander in the context of the anti-usury campaign of 1920.¹⁴⁵ Yet both anti-usury legislation and anti-alien debates were accompanied by the same hostile images of Jews in BVP election material. The party's election campaign for the Reichstag and *Landtag* elections in June 1920 is just one such example. In the course of the Kapp Putsch in March 1920, Georg Heim as BVP president had dissolved the Bavarian Weimar Coalition (SPD, DDP, BVP) almost putsch-like with the aid of para-military units. The following elections in June 1920 returned a conservative-right government of the BVP and its junior partner, the DNVP.¹⁴⁶ The layout of a flyer to these elections is reproduced below; it was designed to bring the party's message across at first glance:

Voters! Watch out!
The hour of truth has come!
Do not go away for election day!
 Do not go foraging, because it is better to live on scarce food another day than be threatened
 for years by
Profiteering,
 Live without a strong government and be socialised to death. If you do not want to be ruled
 by Berlin's
Jewry
 Alone, if you do not want that one-sided
Class rule
 Threatening the German people's peace and security, but if you want order, peace and
 security [...] then vote
BVP¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Four hundred people were issued a deportation order in the time between October 1923 and February 1924. Ninety percent of the deportees were Jews, the remaining ten percent received the order for their involvement in socialist or (after the Hitler Putsch) National Socialist organisations. Most of those concerned could postpone deportation by resorting to legal action still open to them. Walter: *Antisemitische Kriminalität*, p. 77.

¹⁴⁵ Walter also refers to the good relationship between Catholic and Jewish notables in Munich. Ibidem, p. 99, p. 102.

¹⁴⁶ The SPD lost more than half their seats (27 down from 61) and remained from then on in opposition. The DNVP gained ten seats (from 9 to 19) and the BVP won the majority with 65 seats. Klaus Schönhoven: *Die Bayerische Volkspartei 1924-1932*, Düsseldorf, 1972, p. 39.

¹⁴⁷ BVP flyer for the Reichstag elections on 6 June 1920. BAK, ZSG 1 8/2 Flugblätter 1919-33. Also BVP flyer 'Der Bolschewismus' (n.d., likely to be 1919/20): 'These Bolsheviki, mostly men of Jewish decent and therefore without national consciousness' had allegedly decomposed the army, bankrupted the economy while enriching themselves and installing a dictatorship. BAK, ZSG 1 8/2.

After electoral victory, the BVP nominated the deeply conservative Gustav von Kahr as minister president and interior minister of Bavaria, and transferred the government's executive powers almost exclusively into his hands in late September. Kahr's conservative-right government left considerable political influence to right-wing para-military groups which eventually culminated in Hitler's failed coup d'état. The Putsch was highly embarrassing for the Bavarian government who lost valuable political credibility as a result of it. It became clear that Georg Heim's uncompromising federalist and anti-republican policy ultimately proved unsuccessful. The BVP consequently moderated its federalism and monarchism in its new party programme in 1924 and vowed to rein in separatist and antisemitic tendencies.¹⁴⁸ Antisemitism occurred from then on less frequently and less explicitly in BVP publications, but the 1924 party programme, for instance, still deplored the negative Jewish influence on German society.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, the party's attempt to limit the influence of the radical right and the use of antisemitism remained only half-hearted, as will be shown later.

The ultimately political influence of antisemitic rhetoric within Bavarian conservative-right policies should not be underestimated. Dirk Walter, for instance, observes that antisemitic violence in Munich hardly provoked a debate as long as it did not overstep a certain limit (e.g., the desecration of Jewish cemeteries), whereas the far less violent anti-Jewish incidents in Berlin during summer and autumn 1919 led to public protests by the city's media and administration.¹⁵⁰ The explanation is not apathy of the population, but rather that the antisemitic rhetoric of the BVP and the *völkisch* groups affirmed the public's already existing prejudices against Jews. As a result, antisemitism had become common and ubiquitous in Bavaria, while it was still seen as a radical form of Jew-hatred in other parts of Germany. Moreover, BVP leniency towards the radicalism of *völkisch* organisations (and ultimately its junior partner the DNVP) allowed considerable scope for *legal* antisemitic action.

Both Catholic parties and their newspapers have to take the greatest responsibility for the renewed antisemitism after the war. At a time when the 'old' radical right

¹⁴⁸ Schönhofen: *Bayerische Volkspartei*, p. 42.

¹⁴⁹ Lill: 'Deutsche Katholiken', p. 399.

¹⁵⁰ Walter: *Antisemitische Kriminalität*, p. 102.

(Pan-Germans, and other *völkisch* groups) was disorientated and re-grouping, local Centre Parties (Prussia) and the BVP voiced antisemitic allegations in their publications, speeches and election campaigns. Needless to say, the dissemination of antisemitism by *Volksparteien* was more effective than by smaller fringe organisations, not just because of their size, but more importantly due to the respectability lent to antisemitism by a mainstream platform. It was important for the events that followed that the continuous identification of Jews with immoral capitalism and irreligious Bolshevism during the first five years of the Weimar Republic should cement this image in public memory. Bearing in mind the anti-Jewish rhetoric propagated by the Catholic parties and *völkisch* organisations until 1924, the antisemitism of the *Rechtskatholiken* was certainly not alien to Catholics and even if it was not the main reason for the attraction of Catholics to German nationalist ideology, it was certainly not a deterrent.

Not only did political Catholicism share anti-Jewish images with the extreme right, but also its responses to *völkisch* organisations and particularly their antisemitism was too inconsistent to amount to a comprehensive condemnation of their ideology. Indeed, the bishops' conference in Fulda thought that *völkisch* antisemitism was a mere instrument to bridge the anti-clerical element of the *völkisch* movement (as represented by Erich Ludendorff) with the nationalism of *Rechtskatholiken*. The conference decided in 1924 that the best way to limit the appeal of patriotic organisations among young Catholics was to encourage Catholic teachers and youth organisations to adopt components of the right's nationalist propaganda in order to keep the Catholic youth within the Catholic milieu.¹⁵¹ A representative example of this approach is the booklet '*Jungdeutscher Orden* and Catholic Youth' (1924) by Kaplan Heinrich Thöne of Heiligenstadt, bearing the imprimatur of auxiliary bishop Deitmar, Berlin. The booklet was a considerate yet firm criticism of the *Orden*, and a

¹⁵¹ Quotes by Schulte in letter Bertram to bishops at Fulda conference, 24.1.1924. EAK, Gen 23.11, 2. The conference was called in in response to Hitler's failed putsch. While the democratic parties woke up to the threat the *völkisch* movement posed to the Republic, the newly pronounced anti-clericalism of the movement ended the hierarchy's indifference, if not sympathy, to *völkisch* organisations. On the good relations between the Bavarian hierarchy and the early *völkisch* movement see Hastings: 'How Catholic', pp. 383-433. In 1920, the Association of Catholic Clerks (*Verband katholischer kaufmännischer Vereine*) was still allowed to maintain its links to the *völkisch* and antisemitic German National Commercial Assistants' Association (*Verband Deutschnationaler Handlungsgehilfen*). Minutes of Diocesan Conference, Freiburg, 27-29.1.1920. EAF, B2-56/5. On the antisemitism of the Association see Berding: *Moderner Antisemitismus*, pp. 127-29.

commitment to the democratic Republic. Thöne began with praise for those aims shared by the *Orden* and Catholics: a strong, free and greater Germany and the creation of a true *Volksgemeinschaft*.¹⁵² He then asserted, however, that Catholics could not be part of the *Orden* because of its anti-clerical tendencies, *völkisch* nationalism and antisemitism.¹⁵³ Thöne's account of the *Orden's* antisemitism followed the same rhetorical structure, offering understanding that was then followed by a deconstruction of the *Orden's* arguments. However, in the end Thöne only rejected racial antisemitism. At the same time he gave full credit to the widespread notion of dangerous Jewish dominance and Jewry's subversive powers:

We surely have to protect our German culture from the decomposing influence of materialistic Jewry. But the truth also demands following remark: were there not as many Christian profiteers and usurers? [...] And are there not noble and refined Jews in whom we recognise the best tradition of the chosen people?¹⁵⁴

Nevertheless, in addition to such publications, the Catholic community subsequently criticised *völkisch* organisations on further levels. With their moral authority, German bishops stood firmly by their condemnation of patriotic associations (*vaterländische Verbände*) such as the *Stahlhelm* and the *Jungdeutsche Orden* until 1933.¹⁵⁵ This meant that the clergy and ordinary Catholics were not supposed to join either of these associations, nor the NSDAP. The bishops could also obstruct the political activity of the *Rechtskatholiken* by barring their diocesan priests from taking up political mandates for the DNVP.¹⁵⁶ Although episcopal warnings did not include the DNVP or its Catholic sections, the *Rechtskatholiken* were irritated by the condemnation of vital sections of their network, the *Stahlhelm* and the *Jungdeutsche Orden*.

¹⁵² Heinrich Thöne: *Jungdeutsche Orden und katholische Jugend*, Verlag der Scholle, Berlin Weißensee, 1924, p. 6.

¹⁵³ Ibidem, pp. 12-16.

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem, pp. 9-11.

¹⁵⁵ Minutes of Diocesan Conference, Freiburg, 17-19.8.1932. EAF, B2-56/2. On the relationship between the hierarchy and the *Jungdeutsche Orden* see Vogel: *Nationale Kampfverbände*, p. 45.

¹⁵⁶ See here Cardinal Bertram's objection to Ziesche and Wolff's mandate. Minutes NCC meeting, 10.3.1929. BAK, N1324, 177: Apparently, Bertram's resistance had not always been strong enough judging from the letter by Pater Kalthoff, Dortmund. In a letter to Spahn he remarked that Wolff and Ziesche were only able to follow their 'scandalous activities' thanks to Cardinal Bertram's kindness. Letter Kalthoff to Spahn, 1.12.1926. BAK, N1324, 177.

On a political level there was certainly no love lost between the *Rechtskatholiken* and their prime target, the Centre Party, for after all they were political rivals. In the years before 1929 (after that date the party began to concentrate on its opposition to the NSDAP), Centre Party declarations left no doubt that Catholics were not to support the DNVP, because the nationalists placed Germandom before Christendom, and their National Catholic Council, 'bound to Protestant structures', did not stand up for Catholic interests.¹⁵⁷ The Council was warned that not only was it going against the Centre as the political representation of German Catholics, but against Rome, that is, the Catholic Church in general.¹⁵⁸ The arguments of the Centre Party against the racism and antisemitism of the *Jungdeutsche Orden* and the DNVP were sharp in their criticism.¹⁵⁹ For example, the Stuttgart MdR Joseph Andre wrote the following: 'Those who professionally preach racial hatred and widen the denominational rift of our people (*Volk*) are parasites of the German body politic (*Volkskörper*).'¹⁶⁰ However, consistent with the Centre's traditional policies on Jewry and Judaism, many of its publications on the extreme right interpreted *völkisch* antisemitism as an intrinsically 'religious question', and consequently primarily condemned its anti-clericalism and *völkisch* attacks on the Catholic Church rather than on German Jews.¹⁶¹

The BVP condemned *völkisch* antisemitism later than the Centre and with less fervour, which was scarcely surprising since the Bavarian DNVP, called the *Bayerische Mittelpartei*, was the junior partner in every BVP government from the Bavarian Landtag election of June 1920. While the Centre Party and many Catholic

¹⁵⁷ Prof Grebe: 'Zentrum und die deutschen Katholiken. Flugschriften der Deutschen Zentrumspartei' (n.p.), 1924. GStA PK, XII Hauptabteilung, Zeitgeschichtliche Sammlung, III, Nr. 37.

¹⁵⁸ See, e.g., Franz Steffen: 'Deutschnationale Volkspartei. Christentum. Katholizismus', (n.p.), 1922. Steffen was General Secretary of the Centre Party in Eastern Prussia. 'Die Deutschnationale Volkspartei', published by the Reich General Secretariat of the Centre Party, 1928. BAK, ZSG 1 108/7 Deutsche Zentrumspartei. Flugschriften der Deutschen Zentrumspartei und ihrer Landesverbände 1918-28. Also the Centre's handbook 'Die politischen Strömungen unter den Deutschen Katholiken' (n.d., but after 1926), p. 4-5. BAK, ZSG1 108/10.

¹⁵⁹ See, e.g., 'Redeskizze I', 1.8.1930. 'Gedanken für eine politische Rede', 1.1.1931. 'Der Nationalsozialismus. Entwicklung. Geisteshaltung und Ziele', 1931. 'Der Nationalsozialismus. Der Weg ins Chaos', 1931. BAK, ZSG 1 108/10.

¹⁶⁰ Centre Party flyer 1924 'Sozialpolitik. Zentrumspartei und andere Parteien.' 5. Die Deutschvölkischen' (by Joseph Andre, Stuttgart). GStA PK, XII, III, 37. Centre pamphlet on *Jungdeutsche Orden* 'The Centre criticises the occasionally alarmingly antisemitic attitude.' GStA PK, XII, III, 38.

¹⁶¹ Prof Grebe: 'Zentrum und die deutschen Katholiken', 1924. Georg Schreiber, (MdR, Münster): *Grundfragen der Zentrumspolitik. Ein politisches Handbuch in Frage und Antwort*, Berlin, 1924, p. 155, 176. GStA PK, XII, III, 38.

newspapers from 1924 often refrained from direct accusations against Jews, BVP information material strengthened public belief in Jewish corruption and the collusion between social democrats and Jews. Every close associate received this material monthly. It included examples of their political opponents' arguments and suggested ways to counter their claims. These prescriptions were intended to enable a BVP member in talks and conferences to underpin his arguments with facts. With respect to *völkisch* antisemitism this BVP information advised members to fight fire with fire and suggested that they confront prospective voters with various 'facts' about National Socialists who consorted with Jews. For example, one NSDAP candidate was said to have begged the Jewish bank Schlesinger for a job; in another case receipts of Jewish companies were allegedly found in the uniforms of the Brownshirts.¹⁶²

The BVP's attempt to tame the radical right in Bavarian politics after the Hitler Putsch was just as feeble. During the coalition negotiations between the BVP and DNVP in 1924, the BVP gave in to most demands of the German Nationalists. Among these was an invitation to the *völkisch* bloc (including the NSDAP) to take part in these negotiations, and the removal of the liberal and anti-*völkisch* Franz Schweyer from the Interior Ministry. At the same time, the DNVP remained in charge of the Ministry of Justice against the explicit disapproval of the BVP's liberal wing. Both parties eventually issued a statement (they could not settle their differences on detailed policies) in which they vowed to fight the revolution and all its consequences, and promised to govern according to patriotic (*vaterländisch*) principles.¹⁶³ Liberal circles at the time were appalled by these tactics and accused the BVP of not fighting National Socialism vigorously enough.¹⁶⁴

At this point it is worthwhile recalling the *völkisch* and antisemitic character of the DNVP, which is best illustrated by means of its election material. Therein the DNVP (like the BVP/Centre) would express its hope for an 'unconditional denominational

¹⁶² BVP Propaganda Material, NSDAP, 1.12.1929; 1.4.1930; 1.6.1930. BAK, ZSG 1 8/5, VII, (14, 39, 60 respectively). The *Deutsche Landvolkpartei* (Protestant and Catholic) used the same strategy in its anti-Hitler campaign, underlining the 'omnipresence' of the Jews rather than objecting to Hitler's antisemitism. This approach was usually a response to National Socialist accusations that the *Landvolkpartei* was ruled by freemasons and Jews. Reichstag election pamphlet, 14.9.1930, BayHStA, FlSlg 231.

¹⁶³ Schönhoven: *Bayerische Volkspartei*, pp. 100-105.

¹⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 104.

peace' and stress the need for Germany's rebirth in a Christian spirit, and for a German culture and economy based on a 'true Christian-religious worldview'.¹⁶⁵ The party left no doubt that the opposite of the 'good Christian' was the 'Jew'. One flyer attacked the 'marxist-Jewish economic policy' and the 'fatal rule of Jewry in state, culture and economy'. It demanded an 'exclusively German leadership' and the 'elimination (*Ausschaltung*) of all foreign blood (*alles Fremdblütige*), especially Jewish'.¹⁶⁶

The initiatives of the German bishops showed little sympathy for excessive nationalism and racial antisemitism. In March 1931, the bishops of the Cologne Church province issued a joint pastoral letter warning Catholics not to join the National Socialist movement.¹⁶⁷ The bishops' main concern was, however, the integrity of Catholic organisations rather than the rise of antisemitic sentiments.¹⁶⁸ The strategy of offering a 'nationalist movement' within the Catholic milieu eventually led to publications reiterating the same antisemitic arguments that had made the right so popular.

The criticism of *völkisch* organisations by the Centre Party rejected Jew-hatred principally for two reasons: the principle of Christian love that did not tolerate racial discrimination; and to defend Catholic interests since antisemitism was seen as an attack equally on 'Rome and Judah'. The condemnation of the right's antisemitism by the BVP, however, was almost completely compromised by the continuous use of anti-Jewish images in their election campaigns. Such an approach might have been discrediting the *völkisch* parties, but it certainly was not expressing solidarity with the Jews. Instead of providing facts on Jewish life and Judaism, political Catholicism, at best, offered blanket moral instructions on the basis of Christian

¹⁶⁵ For this and the following quotes see the election poster of the *Bayerische Mittelpartei* for a *Landtag* election (n.d.) 'Bayerische Wähler und Wählerinnen! Volk und Staat sind in schwerer Not!', ABP, OA, 9181.

¹⁶⁶ Flyer *Bayerische Mittelpartei* 'Positive deutschvölkische Arbeit' (n.d.). ABP, OA, 9181.

¹⁶⁷ Pastoral signed by bishops of Aachen, Münster, Osnabrück, Trier, Limburg, 5.3.1931. Published in *Kirchliches Amtsblatt für das Bistum Osnabrück*, 7.3.1931, p. 5. Note to Würzburg diocesan clergy carried the same message, Diocesan-Archive Würzburg (DAW), Zeitgeschichte 3. Weimarer Republik 3.1 – 3.2. The hierarchy's warning against National Socialism could however vary in its urgency from diocese to diocese, as could the measures Catholic sympathisers of National Socialism would have to face. In some dioceses this could mean the exclusion from communion and sacraments (Mainz), in others (e.g., Osnabrück) the bishop refrained from such measures. Krenn: *Christliche Arbeiterbewegung*, p. 297.

¹⁶⁸ Letter Cardinal Bertram, Breslau, to Graf von Praschma, 29.1.1926. EBAP, XVIII, 23 Vaterländische Verbände.

love. This political education essentially bolstered the misconception of a Jewish dominance in Germany. Even the political education on National Socialism of the reformist *Volksverein* (started in 1929) included criticism of Weimar parliamentarianism and negative images of Jews.¹⁶⁹

3.1.4 Rechtskatholiken and the Platforms of Political Catholicism

The bias towards anti-socialism was obvious in the organisation of the two most important institutions in the struggle against radicalism: the *Volksverein's* Research and Information Bureau on Bolshevism, the Godless and Freethinker Movement and the Commission for the Struggle against Bolshevism, set up by the Central Committee of the German Catholic Conference.¹⁷⁰ From 1919, and with renewed, well organised strength from 1930, the *Volksverein* developed a prolific anti-socialist publishing activity, and countless lectures on the dangers of communism were organised and attended by huge audiences.¹⁷¹ National Socialism, on the other hand, was not on the radar of the *Volksverein's* headquarters until spring 1930 and then it only raised passing concern within the regional branches.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Grothmann: 'Nationalsozialistische Herausforderung', pp. 294-96. Referring to the *Volksverein's* political education, Grothmann also thought that the strong criticism of Weimar democracy might have confirmed the audience's doubts of the parliamentary system, *ibidem*, pp. 288-89. The *Volksverein* generally refrained from antisemitic agitation. Anti-Jewish stereotypes common at the time, the 'Jewish' usurer and foreigner, and in particular an aversion against Eastern European Jews did occur in its publications and public lectures, though not very often. Such comments usually reminded Catholics not to perceive and condemn Jews as a single race. 'Jewish' characteristics were attributed to external influences rather than inherited racial qualities. See, e.g., Anton Heinen: *Mammonismus und seine Überwindung*, Mönchen-Gladbach, 1920, pp. 14-21. Heinen's lecture, 5th Jungland course, 15-29.1.1927. BA, R81151 / 201.

¹⁷⁰ The Bureau was part of the *Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland*. It was founded in September 1931, its section on the radical right was added a month later. Heitzer: 'Bolschewismusgefahr', p. 360, p. 363. Other organisations which were supposed to face both right- and left-wing radicalism included the Civic Policy Workshop of Catholic Associations (*Staatspolitische Arbeitsgemeinschaft katholischer Verbände*) of the *Volksverein* and the Society for the Promotion of Political Education (*Gesellschaft zur Förderung politischer Bildungsarbeit*), initiated by the Centre Party in April 1927, prolific in its publications but without wider public impact. Grothmann: 'Nationalsozialistische Herausforderung', p. 290.

¹⁷¹ See, e.g., the 'mass audience' for (retired) Hauptmann Pitrow's talk 'The Russian Bolshevism or the Truth on Russia'. Letter Josef Prunner to Dr Brehm, 26.12.1926. BA, R81151 / 125. Well-known personalities such as Friedrich Muckermann and Walter Gurian continuously wrote and spoke on the dangers of bolshevism, likewise attracting large crowds.

¹⁷² Grothmann: 'Nationalsozialistische Herausforderung', p. 289, p. 298. The anti-socialist campaigns on the other hand hardly suffered from such inconsistencies. Single priests set up their own little campaigns by designing, printing and distributing anti-socialist flyers in their parish. This guaranteed that the dangers of socialism were known in the remotest rural village. For example, A. Hessenbach, priest in Schlingen / Kaufbeuren to Algermissen, 23.10.1931. StadtAMG, 15/7/1.

Konrad Algermissen, as president of the Research and Information Bureau, had devoted his energy primarily to the defence against the left, although the hierarchy had planned that his Bureau should confront right-wing radicalism as well.¹⁷³ Algermissen, like many others at the time, saw behind both Bolshevism and the 'Godless movement' a considerable Jewish influence at work. His prejudices against Jews, however, were not as fundamental to his view of the world as they were to the ideology of the *Rechtskatholiken*. Algermissen admired the faith and morality of orthodox Jewry, but was suspicious of an 'Asian element, namely, the cold, putrefying (*zersetzende*) kind of liberal Jewry' who, he thought, were most prone to supporting socialism.¹⁷⁴

The daily routine of Algermissen's Bureau revolved around gathering and distributing information on Bolshevism and the 'Godless movement' – work that Pius XI sponsored with considerable funds.¹⁷⁵ The information was passed on to the press or the dioceses to make it available throughout the Reich. Assisted by the *Volksverein's* speakers and well-known personalities from the Catholic political and social scene, Algermissen almost succeeded in turning it into an international press bureau to answer enquiries on Bolshevism from every level of society and from numerous countries outside Germany.¹⁷⁶ While the *Volksverein* was eventually disbanded by the Nazis in 1933, Algermissen continued his work against Bolshevism as the German branch of the Pro Deo Commission from December 1934 onwards.¹⁷⁷

The Commission for the Struggle against Bolshevism, on the other hand, had never attempted to appear as a bulwark against right-wing radicalism.¹⁷⁸ According to the

¹⁷³ Heitzer: 'Bolschewismusgefahr', p. 360.

¹⁷⁴ Konrad Algermissen: *Die Gottlosenbewegung der Gegenwart und ihre Überwindung*, Hannover, 1933, p. 53, as quoted in Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 181.

¹⁷⁵ Heitzer: 'Bolschewismusgefahr', p. 360, p. 370.

¹⁷⁶ Ibidem, p. 370. According to Heitzer, the Bureau succeeded in creating and maintaining a profound fear of Russian Bolshevism among German Catholics. Ibidem, p. 379.

¹⁷⁷ Note 'Der Kampf gegen die Gottlosen Internationale. Die deutsche Pro Deo Kommission' by press bureau Krauss, Berlin-Lichterfelde, 18.12.1934. The note was optimistic about the commission's work as they were able to work under excellent conditions, thanks to the 'effective anti-Marxist policy' of the National Socialist government, while other countries had not yet managed to 'eradicate Freethinker organisations'. EAK, Gen 23,76.

¹⁷⁸ The Commission was founded by the Central Committee of the Annual German Catholic Conference (*Zentralkomitee des Deutschen Katholikentages, ZdK*) in early 1930. Heitzer: 'Bolschewismusgefahr', p. 363.

Commission it was Bolshevism that posed the greatest threat to German society. For this reason, it considered it necessary that all Catholics, from the political left to the *Rechtskatholiken*, should join the Commission in its struggle against Bolshevism. The Commission had a more forceful impact than all the other educational institutions for three reasons. First, it managed to attract the most influential personalities of German Catholicism and funding from the breadth of the ecclesiastical structure.¹⁷⁹ Second, it had close contacts with government bodies.¹⁸⁰ Third, it achieved the widest distribution of its lectures with the help of modern media – radio and film.¹⁸¹ More important, however, was the participation of the Commission in the *Zentralkomitee* and thus in the preparations to the annual Catholic conferences (*Katholikentage*). Political Catholicism was most receptive to the *Rechtskatholiken* in the combined struggle against Bolshevism and the result of the Commission's imperative for harmonious co-operation was that political Catholicism invited *Rechtskatholiken* to contribute to the Catholic discourse on a central platform of political Catholicism.

The discussions of the Commission covered the breadth of the political spectrum. The centre-left welcomed the positive aspects of socialism and warned against an uncompromisingly anti-socialist campaign.¹⁸² However, the strong anti-socialism of the Centre's leadership and important lay leaders overrode such sentiments, so that the activities of the Commission centred almost exclusively around the protection of religious interests and the promotion of national unity. The available sources of the Commission do not suggest that the Catholic right was able to imprint its antisemitic worldview on the discourse of the Commission. On the contrary, the discussions recorded reflect differences in opinion on how to judge National Socialism, and divergent attitudes towards Jews. Yet they also underline points of contact between

¹⁷⁹ Its constituting meeting was attended by the leading representatives of the Catholic lay organisations, the Centre, the Catholic press and universities, amongst them Josef Joos of the workers' associations, Franz von Galen, Friedrich Muckermann, Prelate Georg Schreiber (1882-1963), a well-known Catholic theologian and cultural envoy, MdR from 1920-33. Schreiber spoke publicly against antisemitism (e.g., in 1920), but also saw German *Volkstum* as the essence to the political system, German culture and nationalism. Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 100. The funding came from the dioceses, hierarchy or religious orders. Heitzer: 'Bolschewismusgefahr', pp. 362-63.

¹⁸⁰ It worked in close co-operation with the Interior Ministry against Bolshevism and managed to set up 'Watchpost Berlin', an office that kept close personal contacts with high-ranking civil servants and obtained official government material on socialist groups. Heitzer: 'Bolschewismusgefahr', p. 369.

¹⁸¹ The Commission transmitted its lectures via the two largest radio stations: *Deutsche Welle* and *Deutschlandsender*, but also used film and records as medium. Ibidem, p. 367.

¹⁸² Ibidem, p. 363.

the Catholic right and political Catholicism on both topics. For example, when the Commission met under the slogan of 'The Bolshevik danger in Germany and our defence' in January 1932, it was almost inevitable that the question of Jewish influence in socialist movements would be raised. For most of the *Rechtskatholiken* present at the meeting, such a link was self-evident, as was the necessity for a Christian front against Bolshevism. Konrad Algermissen whole-heartedly subscribed to both, but he also added that the president of the world organisation of orthodox Jewry had offered his co-operation in the struggle against Bolshevism. Algermissen reminded the meeting that 'orthodox Jewry stands in sharp contrast to those liberal Jewish circles who work for the propagation of Bolshevism'.¹⁸³

The Commission was similarly undecided in its judgement of National Socialism and the ways in which the movement should be encountered by Catholics. Friedrich Muckermann suggested at the November meeting of the Commission in 1931 that political Catholicism needed to embrace the organisational structure and propaganda methods of the NSDAP as a role model for the future Catholic-national will in order to attract more supporters.¹⁸⁴ At the following meeting of the Commission Muckermann opposed the warning expressed by Msgr Wolker, general secretary of the Catholic Association for Young Men, that the Commission should also act against National Socialism, as this movement was just another form of Bolshevism. Muckermann felt instead that some aspects of the National Socialist movement could rightly be seen in a positive light. Its 'race-chatter' for instance, Muckermann claimed, could be understood at the scientific level of eugenics as National Socialism was also essentially striving for a healthy spirit in a healthy body.¹⁸⁵ Despite his pragmatic judgement of the National Socialist movement, Muckermann nevertheless showed little understanding for National Socialist Jew-hatred. He thought that this specific form of antisemitism belonged 'to the weirdest and most impossible concepts that exist in this field'. Like Konrad Algermissen, he admitted at the same time to the existence of a 'Jewish problem' ('no less than the Jews do') but rejected the attempt to solve the 'Jewish question' on the basis of race theory.¹⁸⁶ Neither Algermissen nor Muckermann were part of the network of the *Rechtskatholiken*. They sympathised with elements of the worldview of the Catholic right, with its

¹⁸³ Minutes Meeting extended *Zentralkomitee*, 12.-14. 1.1932, p. 16. StadtAMG, 15/2/129.

¹⁸⁴ Minutes Constituent Meeting of the Commission, 2.11.1931, Münster. StadtAMG, 15/7/5.

¹⁸⁵ Cited in Heitzer: 'Bolschewismusgefahr', p. 366.

¹⁸⁶ Friedrich Muckermann, SJ: 'Auf der Gralwarte', *Der Gral*, February 1932, p. 416.

determined anti-Bolshevism and passionate devotion to a revival of a German national consciousness. Both shared with the Catholic right the conviction that there existed a 'Jewish problem', particularly with respect to the perceived Bolshevik threat. This was the intersection between mainstream Catholicism and the Catholic right. Yet beyond these points of contact, Algermissen and Muckermann represented the attitudes of the Catholic Church in general on the 'Jewish question', in particular in the representation of orthodox Jewry as the 'good Jews' and the rejection of National Socialist antisemitism because of its racial foundation. It was not antisemitism that was rejected but the universality and method of antisemitism as practiced by National Socialism.

DNVP Catholics were eventually offered a broader platform than the deliberations of the Commission through an invitation to assist with the preparations for the 1932 *Katholikentag*. This *Katholikentag* also fulfilled the long-standing demand of DNVP Catholics to be included in the speakers' panel.¹⁸⁷ This conciliatory gesture by their former opponent came at the right time for the *Rechtskatholiken*. Their own infrastructure within the DNVP and the financial security of the *Politische Kolleg* had been severely limited under Hugenberg's leadership of the DNVP. The symbolic character of the invitation should not be underestimated, as it was seen as political Catholicism's acknowledgment of the right-wing of German Catholicism and was duly applauded as such by the *Rechtskatholiken*. *Katholikentage* were a showcase of German Catholicism's strength to the non-Catholic world, and a platform to discuss social and political issues of the day. They represented every shade of political Catholicism, from Centre and BVP parliamentarians, from democrats such as ex-chancellor Wilhelm Marx or Friedrich Dessauer to the monarchists of the *Rechtskatholiken* and fellow travellers of the right like Josef Eberle.¹⁸⁸ The *Zentralkomitee* as the organiser of *Katholikentage* was, however, traditionally closer to the conservative (if not monarchical) attitude of the bishops than to the principles

¹⁸⁷ Dr Glasebock spoke on 'The Origin and Meaning of Radical Populism (*Massenstimmung*)'. Other speakers included Emil Ritter ('The City-Dweller as Citizen'), Dr Reinermann ('People's Political Education Fighting Political Demagogy'), Mr Steiner ('Parties, Professional Associations, Organisations and Leagues as Elements of Order'), Prof Stohr ('The Religious Principle of Political Order'). Filthaupt: *Deutsche Katholikentage*, p. 323.

¹⁸⁸ For lists of participants see *ibidem*.

of social Catholicism expressed by the left-wing of the Centre Party.¹⁸⁹ *Rechtskatholiken* had been present at various *Katholikentage*. Marie von Gebsattel was invited as a speaker in 1921 and again in 1931. Cardinal Bertram enjoyed the company of the Catholic Silesian aristocrats at the Breslau *Katholikentag* in 1926 and Frhr von Lüninck lectured on 'Catholic Farmers and Estate Politics (Standespolitik)' at the *Katholikentag* in Nuremberg in 1931. But an explicit invitation to DNVP Catholics to participate in the *Katholikentag's* debates had not gone out until 1932, when six German-national Catholics were invited to the round table of Group 9, the workshop on civic affairs (*staatspolitische Angelegenheiten*).¹⁹⁰ Gabriele Clemens has seen in the invitation to *Katholikentage* a sign of the increasing importance of *Rechtskatholiken* within political Catholicism. These occasions allowed the Catholic right to present DNVP policies, which were otherwise usually rejected by a Centre Party audience.¹⁹¹

At the closing session of the *Katholikentag* in Essen in 1932, Dr Wilhelm Reinermann (another member of Group 9) spoke on 'People's education to fight political demagogy' (*Volksaufklärung im Kampf gegen politische Demagogie*). Reinermann is an illustrative example of the *Rechtskatholiken's* success in attracting conservative Catholics to their cause. He was vice-editor of Eberle's *Schönere Zukunft* and editor of *Das Deutsche Volk*, the paper of the *Ring deutscher Katholiken*. Beyond conservative-right circles, Reinermann had considerable influence within political Catholicism as leader of the Association of Catholic Journeymen. On the last day of the *Katholikentag*, 5 September 1932, Reinermann stressed the importance of leadership:

Despite all levelling (*Vermassung*) the power of the pure, sacrificing, rational leader continues to break through. [...] Similarly important is the personality of Reich President von Hindenburg in the German people's identity (*im deutschen Volksbewußtsein*). He is the guarantor of German unity, a bridge to German freedom and a symbol of German honour – high above all discord [...] the personality of Adolf Hitler, too, has become a proof of the leader's power in a time that only seems to be moved by the mechanics of

¹⁸⁹ Hürten: *Kleine Geschichte*, p. 189.

¹⁹⁰ Emil Ritter chaired this workshop, as he did the previous year when he discussed *Volkstum*, Bolshevism and Catholicism. Apart from Frhr von Lüninck, there were Prince of Hohenzollern-Namedy, Dr Glasebock, and Dr Doms from Ratibor. Filthaupt: *Deutsche Katholikentage*, p. 315, p. 323.

¹⁹¹ Clemens: *Martin Spahn*, p. 173.

the masses. [...] [He is] a manifestation of the personality's symbolic power of a mass movement.¹⁹²

On one of the central platforms of political Catholicism a *Rechtskatholik* had brought the annual Catholic meeting to a closure by praising the leadership skills of Adolf Hitler only weeks after Hitler had declared his solidarity with the SA murderers of Potempa and only two months before the Reichstag elections.¹⁹³ Reinermann's closing speech symbolises the success of the *Rechtskatholiken* as he was able to present their politics and worldview on the largest stage of German Catholicism. The commitment to Christian values, the glorification of the medieval Reich idea, the emphasis on German *Volkstum*, and the 'Jewish question' provided points of contact between *Rechtskatholiken* and conservative political Catholicism. Both could agree on the 'degenerate influence' of liberal Jewry and its support for Bolshevism. It left the widely held conviction of a link between liberal Jewry and Bolshevism unchallenged and did little to enlighten Catholics about the lives of German Jews. Beyond this common ground there was hardly an agreement on how to 'solve' the 'Jewish question'. Nevertheless, the known virulent antisemitism of the *Rechtskatholiken* proved to be no obstacle to a closer co-operation between the *Rechtskatholiken* and the *Zentralkomitee*. The immediate effect of the invitation of *Rechtskatholiken* to the councils of the *Zentralkomitee* on anti-Jewish attitudes within political Catholicism as such was limited. It did not result in a radicalisation of antisemitism. Neither were – to my knowledge – the latter's platforms used to propagate the antisemitism of the Catholic right. The deliberations in the councils signalled, however, that by the early 1930s, the existence of a 'Jewish question' was generally accepted as a given fact. On the whole these genuine points of contact between *Rechtskatholiken* and conservative political Catholicism hardly encouraged a rational and consequent dismantling of the most widespread anti-Jewish prejudices. Rather than forming a bulwark against antisemitism and the radical right, the conservative Centre had re-adjusted its defences right off the centre, now encompassing themes of the right in its own discourse. It certainly resulted in a

¹⁹² As quoted by Thieme: 'Deutsche Katholiken', p. 280.

¹⁹³ In August 1932, members of the SA murdered a communist sympathiser in the Upper Silesian village of Potempa. They were found guilty, but this did not stop Hitler to declare his 'unlimited loyalty' to the murderers. Richard Bessel: 'The Nazi Capture of Power', *JCH*, 39 (2004), 169-188, (181).

further polarisation of German Catholicism into conservative (integralist) and reform Catholics instead of fostering the faith of young Catholics in democratic processes.

3.2 England

3.2.1 *Antisemitism and English Catholics, 1919-1926*

Antisemitic images after the war were most likely to occur in English Catholic discussions of modern capitalism and socialism, but were not limited to the pure economic and political aspects. 'Materialism' was often associated with a 'Jewish spirit' that pervaded national film, theatre and literature in the immediate post-war years.¹⁹⁴ Antisemitism was not limited to the pages of English Catholic newspapers at that time; it was also perceptible in discussions and communications of Catholic lay organisations such as the reformist Catholic Social Guild in Oxford and the conservative Catholic Federation in Salford. This early peak in anti-Jewish sentiments was to a considerable extent part of the general anti-Jewish attitude aroused by a 'red scare' after the war.¹⁹⁵ In his book *The Jews* (1922) Hilaire Belloc wrote on the 'Jewish problem' in general, but in particular about what he saw as the lethal threat of 'Jewish Bolshevism':

Bolshevism stated the Jewish problem with a violence and an insistence such that it could no longer be denied either by the blindest fanatic or the most resolute liar. [...] Henceforth it was to be discussed quite openly. Henceforth it could only become, more and more, the chief problem of politics and give rise to that menacing situation upon a solution of which depends the security of our future. For the Bolshevik movement, or rather explosion, was Jewish.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ See, e.g., the film review of 'Ben Hur' alleging that it must be a 'Jewish' film, because Jesus Christ's murderers were said to be the Romans and not the Jews. *The Harvest*, May 1923, p. 98. On a perceived negative influence of a 'Jewish materialist doctrine' see *Catholic Times*, 3.1.1920, p. 6; *Catholic Herald*, 24.7.1926, p. 8.

¹⁹⁵ Geoffrey Field remarks that the image of the 'Jewish financier' was at the centre of anti-Jewish prejudices in England before the turn of the century. In the early twentieth century, however, animosities shifted to 'Jewish communism' and found their focus in the figure of the 'Jewish Bolshevik' after the Russian Revolution. Field: 'Antisemitism with the Boots off', p. 298, p. 300.

¹⁹⁶ Hilaire Belloc: *The Jews*, London, 1922, p. 45, p. 55.

At the time, the book indeed hit a nerve in the Bolshevik scare.¹⁹⁷ Not surprisingly the book received mostly favourable reviews, even from non-Catholic critics.¹⁹⁸

Belloc's reputation and his influence on other writers must not be underestimated. Richard Downey, Archbishop of Liverpool, described Hilaire Belloc as a 'brilliant conversationalist' of 'exuberant intellectual vitality'. Downey recounted how he had worked together with Belloc on issues of the *Catholic Gazette*, and occasionally the *Eye-Witness* and later the *New Witness*:

On his generation he has stamped two or three ideas which will remain. Time is making us realise their truth. They are the servile state, the damage of corruption in politics, and the role of the Catholic Church as the Mother of European civilisation. [...] I hope that his books will be read and pondered for years to come for they are the writings of a great European, a great Christian and scholar.¹⁹⁹

Some writers adopted individual aspects of Belloc's thoughts, while others identified widely with his worldview. Canon William Barry was one of those who agreed in many ways with Belloc. Barry grew up in London's East End as the son of Irish immigrants and later became Canon of St Chad's in Birmingham. He was a prolific writer on the arts and literature, and a frequent commentator on current affairs in the *Catholic Times* and in *The Universe*. Barry was not an outsider in the Catholic Church in England. He was respected by Cardinal Bourne and Archbishop McIntyre of Birmingham. Both of them were familiar with Barry's work for the Catholic media and encouraged his zealotry.²⁰⁰

Barry judged Belloc's *The Jews* to be 'the finest book of his [Belloc's] career', and agreed with him that the current Jewish pre-dominance in English society 'is real and abounding in danger'. Acculturation, according to Barry, was not feasible because:

¹⁹⁷ Lebzelter: *Political Antisemitism*, pp. 17-21.

¹⁹⁸ Part of this positive response was that in the eyes of many contemporaries the book denounced the insanity and falsehood of antisemitism, ridiculed the notion of a Jewish world conspiracy / revolution and paid tribute to the war efforts of British Jews. Compared to Beamish and Leese's rabid antisemitism, Belloc seemed to offer a 'reasoned political solution' – voluntary segregation. Reviews in *The Times*, 27.3.1922; *The Sunday Times*, 2.4.1922; *The Spectator*, 29.4.1922; or *The Observer* 16.4.1922. All cited in Charlotte Lea Klein: '50 Years ago Belloc's *The Jews* and Galsworthy's *Loyalties Revealed*. English Antisemitism in the 1920s', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 6 (1972), 23-29.

¹⁹⁹ Richard Downey: 'Hilaire Belloc. An Appreciation', AAL Downey Collection Series 3 I, Sermons and Addresses.

²⁰⁰ Letter Barry to Archbishop McIntyre, 20.4.1923. BAA, McIntyre Papers, May-April 1923.

the whole structure of our civilised world is Christian, not Jewish; and we have to defend it from ruin. That if we leave its defence in the hands of an Oriental race it will go down as the Roman did before it.²⁰¹

Barry, like Belloc, saw rescue in the teachings of the Catholic Church and the segregation of Jews and Christians.²⁰²

Unlike German Catholicism, the community in England had no recourse to a Catholic party and social or professional Catholic associations were few and far between. The two organisations that fitted the German pattern closest were the Catholic Federation in Salford and the Catholic Social Guild in Oxford. Belloc's influence and anti-Jewish rhetoric was perceptible in both organisations in the immediate post-war years, though more so in the Catholic Federation.

In Salford, Belloc's staunch anti-socialist views were eagerly embraced by the Catholic Federation and with it his view of 'Jewish Bolshevism'.²⁰³ Here 'Jewish Bolshevism' became not just a matter of the written word in low circulation diocesan papers, but a matter of the spoken word. At the Federation's conference in 1923, for example, the antagonism of 'Jewish Marxism' and Catholicism was again emphasised:

[T]he bony skeleton that is left of German Protestant philosophy is joining hands with German Jewish Marxian Socialist philosophy to lay hands on the family of Christ. Nothing can save England than a strong combination of Christian forces.²⁰⁴

Bishop Casartelli of Salford whole-heartedly supported Thomas Burns in the creation of the Catholic Federation and wrote regularly for its paper, the *Catholic Federationist*. The Russian Revolution had crystallised Casartelli's darkest fears and became a continuous feature in his sermons and pastorals.²⁰⁵ Troubled as Casartelli was by Russian Bolshevism and the growing attraction to socialism in his own diocese, Belloc's *The Jews* seemed like a revelation to him. He noted in his diary:

²⁰¹ This and the previous quotes in Barry: 'The Everlasting Jew', *The Universe*, 12.5.1922, p. 8.

²⁰² Barry: 'Sign of Times', *Catholic Times*, 20.11.1920, p. 7. See also Barry's book *The Coming of the Age of the Catholic Church. A Forecast*, London, 1929.

²⁰³ Burns proudly announced that he was co-operating with the 'New Witness League'. *Catholic Federationist*, April 1919, p. 3. Belloc was a frequent speaker on Federation conferences and the journal published extracts of his books as well as numerous articles by Belloc.

²⁰⁴ *Catholic Federationist*, December 1923, p. 5.

²⁰⁵ For Casartelli's pastorals and sermons see Salford Diocesan Archives (SDA), Acta Salfordiensia Episcopi Quarti 1916-18, 1919-21, 1922-25. Acta Casartelli.

have spent much time reading Belloc's wonderful book 'The Jews'. (Casartelli's emphasis) He maintains that Bolshevism is essentially a Jewish movement.²⁰⁶

The bishop hoped that the Federation would be able to block the inroads socialism had already made among Salford Catholics since 1906.²⁰⁷ Not surprisingly, the diocesan publications in Salford, the *Catholic Federationist* and *The Harvest*, often alluded to the links between Jewry and Bolshevism.²⁰⁸ Burns was, however, not universally supported by the English bishops. Cardinal Bourne, Bishop Keating of Liverpool and the Westminster branch of the Catholic Federation had fallen foul of Thomas Burns' acid anti-socialist campaigns.²⁰⁹

The Catholic Social Guild on the other hand generally refrained from a simplistic, demonised picture of socialism. Save for a few authors, references to the alleged workings of Jews behind the socialist scene were non-existent in Guild publications.²¹⁰ However, the anti-communist hype in the early 1920s convinced a few authors of this otherwise liberal organisation of a valid 'Jewish-Bolshevik' link.²¹¹ One of them was Leslie Toke, a founding member of the Catholic Social Guild, teacher at the Guild's workers' college, chairman of its executive committee until 1938 and an admirer of Belloc. Toke was a respected expert on economic and social questions.²¹² In his position as teacher, Toke encouraged his students to immerse themselves in Belloc's and Chesterton's Distributist theory.²¹³ Following a query from Fr Plater, the Guild's secretary, concerning the 'social question', Toke produced the essay 'The Social Unrest' for which he relied on Belloc's *The Servile State*, Chesterton's *The Party System* and *New Witness* publications.²¹⁴ Therein, he

²⁰⁶ Casartelli diary, entry 28.6.1922. SDA, Casartelli Papers.

²⁰⁷ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 120-21.

²⁰⁸ The underlying theme of both papers was communism's hostility towards Christianity. For examples of the Jews' role in this triangle see, e.g., *The Harvest*, May 1923, p. 98.

²⁰⁹ Bourne was concerned that Burns' radicalism in Salford would undermine the hierarchy's attempts at reconciliation with the Labour Party's socialism after the First World War. Confidential letter Bourne to Casartelli, 20.5.1919. SDA, Catholic Federation 182/73. Also cited in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 141.

²¹⁰ The Guild published the monthly *Social Democrat* and *Catholic Social Guild's Yearbook*. I have not come across antisemitic statements in these journals.

²¹¹ Apart from Toke, see, e.g., Canon Villiers (Birmingham) who was apparently taken by the hypothesis that Bolshevism was a Jewish movement. BAA, AP / C23 Communism.

²¹² Letter Fr O'Hea to Rev P Louis Barde, Paris, 27.4.1925. CSG, E18.

²¹³ Letter by J.B. Graham to Toke (n.d.). CSG, E18.

²¹⁴ He gave credit to the authors in his chapter on capitalism, the House of Commons, p. 5. 'The Social Unrest', by Toke in letter to Plater, 27.10.1917. CSG, E11. At the same time he was also in

described British politics and economics as being ruled by a secretive set of people (amongst others Jewish financiers).²¹⁵

The secretary of the Guild, Fr Plater, used excerpts of Leslie Toke's essay to prepare notes for Cardinal Bourne's Lent Pastoral, *The Nation's Crisis* (1918). The pastoral assumed, as had Belloc and Toke, that Britain's political system had gradually evolved into a plutocracy, leaving the working class behind as slaves. But Toke's conspiratorial and anti-Jewish picture of British politics found no place in Bourne's pastoral.²¹⁶ Considering the generally moderate and progressive outlook of the Catholic Social Guild it seems remarkable that Leslie Toke and Fr Plater 'accepted a view of the Jew as a symbol of "acquisitive finance capitalism"'.²¹⁷ It appears less surprising in the context of the time and especially in connection with Leslie Toke's reading of Belloc.

The popular hypothesis of a Jewish-communist link during the first years after the war did affect members even of politically moderate organisations such as the Catholic Social Guild. Anti-Jewish rhetoric was much more sustainable where the local bishop held strong anti-communist convictions, as in the case of the Salford Catholic Federation, where Bishop Casartelli placidly shared Belloc's view of a 'Jewish Bolshevik movement' and supported the Federation's secretary in his anti-communist and at times anti-Jewish crusade. However, compared with the more widespread Catholic antisemitism in Germany in the same period, such sentiments remained limited and were often restricted to a few authors. No public anti-Jewish statement by the English hierarchy is recorded; such comments were largely avoided, as the example of Bourne's pastoral, 'The Nation's Crisis', showed. Furthermore, it is not really possible to speak of an institutionalised antisemitism, as the English Catholic organisational infrastructure was considerably weaker than in Germany and the absence of a Catholic party hampered a wide and systematic dissemination of antisemitism throughout the community. From the mid-1920s antisemitic statements were the domain either of G.K. Chesterton's Distributists or the Catholic Guild of Israel. Outside these two circles anti-Jewish sentiments were less public in this

correspondence with Belloc over matters of publishing, guild socialism and private property. CSG, C15.

²¹⁵ 'The Social Unrest', p. 5, p. 11, p. 14.

²¹⁶ Comments in Toke's 'The Social Unrest' and Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 126-28.

²¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 126.

period. The intense anti-communist atmosphere at the time was however quite infectious. Even a mild mannered man such as Fr Martindale of the CSG, who usually wrote on pious topics, was convinced of an 'unhealthy Jewish influence' at the time.²¹⁸ In 1937 he claimed at the Annual Meeting of the CGI that Jews were doing 'an exceedingly great deal of harm at present almost the whole world over, not only in the commercial world but very much indeed in the artistic world and in the political and moral worlds'.²¹⁹

After this brief survey of anti-Jewish sentiments within the English Catholic community in the early 1920s, attention should be turned to the Distributist League and the editors of G.K. Chesterton's journal *G.K.'s Weekly*. Their journalistic work primarily sustained the anti-Jewish and pro-fascist discourse of the late 1930s within English Catholicism. An overview of their work and worldview is followed by a description of the responses of the Catholic community to fascism and an assessment of two occasions when Catholic organisations co-operated with figures of the far right. The aim is to understand the influence of Hilaire Belloc's and G.K. Chesterton's worldview on contemporary English Catholicism.

3.2.2 *Distributism*

The Distributist League was founded in September 1926 around Hilaire Belloc, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, and AJ Penty.²²⁰ Against the background of the dislocation of the British economy after the First World War and the rapidly rising numbers of unemployed in the later 1920s, Distributism was part of a social theory that, like the related Social Credit Movement of CH Douglas, criticised conventional economic policy at the time and questioned the philosophical basis of government and society. While Douglas' Social Credit Movement argued for a managed currency and consumer credits to revitalise industry through growing consumer demand,

²¹⁸ In one of his rare antisemitic statements, Martindale saw most of the modern 'affected, snobbish, and cranky [...] arts-world' under Jewish control. Fr Martindale: 'The Pestilent Word "Culture"', *Catholic Herald*, 17.8.1935, p. 4.

²¹⁹ CGI annual meeting report, 25.10.1937, p. 5. Martindale was aware of his prejudices (he called himself 'not yet altogether regenerated'), emphasised that he was not speaking of *the Jews* but of Jews and would rather opt for greater compassion than segregation. Sisters of Sion, CGI Papers (CGI).

²²⁰ Jay Corrin: *G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. The Battle Against Modernity*, London, 1981, p. 105. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 183.

Distributism sought a more radical remedy in the distribution of property in order to bring about a lasting change to society.²²¹ The Distributist ideal lay in a corporatist organisation of the economy and society.

The term 'Catholic right' sits a little uneasy with the group. The Distributist League never managed to form a political party, and although it had been close to the Labour party initially, it was never part of a party in the manner the National Catholic Council of the DNVP was. Although the Distributist League and *G.K.'s Weekly* are seen today as organisations bordering on the extreme right, the Distributists, unlike the *Rechtskatholiken*, were a very disparate group of people, often linked only through their enthusiasm for Chesterton and Belloc's social theory. Many of them were arch-Liberals with a social conscience for whose taste the Fabians, as social reformers, were too socialist. With respect to their political outlook, members of the Distributist League represented almost the entire range of the political spectrum, with the exception of communism. Utopian socialists like Eric Gill and the Labour politicians were part of this new movement, as well as the similarly utopian Franciscan Father McNabb, and TWC Curd, both of them active in Catholic lay organisations (the Catholic Guild of Israel and the Catholic Truth Society respectively). The movement was not exclusively Catholic, though, as Kester Aspden has remarked, a certain Catholicity came to dominate Distributist thought.²²² Still, Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton and the Distributist League were chosen as representatives of the Catholic right in England for their comparability with the *Rechtskatholiken* in terms of their antisemitic and pro-fascist worldview. Like the *Rechtskatholiken*, the Chesterbelloc group moved in a grey area between conservatism and fascism with contacts and interests in both camps. For example, Douglas Jerrold, a convert to Catholicism, a publicist and conservative politician, edited *The English Review* between 1930 and 1936 before he replaced Christopher Dawson at the *Dublin Review* and assisted Michael de la Bédoyère at the *Catholic Herald* from 1938. Although Jerrold's initial political home was the Conservative Party, he also had contacts with numerous right-wing antisemitic organisations, among them the January Club, and later the Windsor Club.²²³

²²¹ Richard Thurlow: *Fascism in Britain. A History, 1918-1985*, Oxford, 1987, pp. 40-41.

²²² Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 183.

²²³ Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 133.

Arnold Lunn, a Methodist convert to Catholicism (1933) and writer, sat on the board of editors of the *Catholic Times*. He was also a member and vice-president of The Liberty Restoration League, whose president and other signatories were also members of the fascist organisation The Link. The League's aim was to oppose 'state despotism', and it hoped to further this through targeted lobbying: 'It is mainly [...] on the good offices of Members and Peers that the League relies for the propagation of its policy, and it is in Private Member Bills that the spearhead of its attack on Jewry may be looked for.'²²⁴ C. Featherstone Hammond, author of the Distributist League's Handbook and the expert on financial affairs for *G.K.'s Weekly*, was according to the description of the files of the police Special Branch 'an associate of Captain Archibald Ramsay of the pro-German, right-wing Right Club and a former assistant to Lt-Col Seton Hutchinson in the National Workers Party of Great Britain'. He was an official of the pressure group National Citizens' Union, whose first chairman was Colonel AH Lane of the deeply antisemitic Britons Society, a 'precursor of British racist fascism'.²²⁵ Featherstone Hammond also attended secret meetings of prominent fascists and antisemites in autumn 1939 initiated by Oswald Mosley, Admiral Barry Domvile, the founder of the fascist The Link, and Captain Ramsay. The aim was to co-ordinate the activities of right-wing organisations in Britain, which they did not achieve.²²⁶ Featherstone Hammond was eventually detained in summer 1940 under Defence Regulation 18B, the Emergency Powers Act promulgated on 1 September 1939. It allowed the authorities to detain those who were seen as a threat to the security of the state, mainly pro-German organisations, British fascists and enemy aliens.²²⁷

Christopher Hollis, 'a Francoist for the sake of religion'²²⁸, moved in and out of CH Douglas' social credit movement and the Distributists. Both movements were known for their contempt for high finance, parliamentary politics and big business, which

²²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 59-60.

²²⁵ The Britons Society was established in 1918 by Henry Hamilton Beamish. More important than the small debating society was its publishing arm, the Britons Publishing Society, dedicated to printing antisemitic material and the distribution of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Thurlow: *Fascism in Britain*, p. 24, pp. 66-67.

²²⁶ Ibidem, pp. 180-87.

²²⁷ Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 64, p. 131, p. 221, p. 267. Thurlow: *Fascism in Britain*, pp. 190-200.

²²⁸ Morris: 'Catholic Writers II', p. 86.

went increasingly hand in hand with antisemitic conspiracy theories.²²⁹ Hollis was also on the board of directors of *The Tablet*. Like Arnold Lunn and Douglas Jerrold he was taken by Belloc's thesis of the 'servile state' and was convinced that only authoritarian moral and political standards and ultimately the Catholic Church could save a chaotic modern world.²³⁰ Even Eric Gill with his socialist convictions spoke as a member of the Peace Pledge Union on the same platform as known associates of the BUF.²³¹ He also owned 7% of *G.K.'s Weekly* and was the journal's art critic.²³²

Rechtskatholiken and the editors of *G.K.'s Weekly* had a considerable standing and influence in their communities, the former due to their status, the latter through their literary fame. Belloc and G.K. Chesterton were seen as the defenders of Catholic faith and values in increasingly secular times. They were renowned for their self-assured intellect and literary talent and had become the antidote to the alleged semi-literate Catholic ghetto in England. Arnold Lunn saw in Belloc the 'distinguished general' of the 'anti-posh army'.²³³ To their critics, however, the pair became infamous for their open support of Italian and Spanish fascism and for their antisemitism. As in the case of the *Rechtskatholiken*, the main interest in Distributism lies in the group's worldview and antisemitism, its nature and motivation, and in the influence and effect, if exerted, on the wider Catholic community.

3.2.2.1 *The Distributist League. Aims and Organisation*

Our purpose is revolution. We do not want to tinker with the capitalist system, we want to destroy it. We are, in fact [...] the only revolutionary body in England. [...] We do not propose to blow it [parliament] up with TNT, but with argument at first and then by means of co-operation of the weak versus the strong.²³⁴

²²⁹ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 162, p. 192. For Major Douglas' Social Credit movement see PRO HO 45/24966; especially the report sent to Sir John Goodwin, 18.12.1940 and an intercept from the Social Credit Co-ordinating Committee, also 1940. Both comment on the organisation's antisemitism and pro-fascist propaganda. For an account of Major Douglas see John Hughes: *Major Douglas. The Policy of a Philosophy*, Glasgow, 2002.

²³⁰ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, pp. 164-65.

²³¹ Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 180, p. 42, p. 225, p. 178.

²³² Sewell: *Catholics*, pp. 62-65.

²³³ Letter Arnold Lunn to Belloc, 22.11.1932. Boston College, Burns Library, Belloc Papers.

²³⁴ Chesterton, *G.K.'s Weekly (GKW)*, 3.12.1927. Cited in Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 110.

With these challenging words, written in 1927, G.K. Chesterton announced Distributism's ultimate aim. In 1925 he had founded the paper *G.K.'s Weekly* – the heart of Distributism with the initial objective to teach the public Distributist ideals and lifestyle, hoping that this would gradually change public perception of politics and eventually revolutionise British society. Owing to Chesterton's literary contacts and the close relationship to AR Orage's *The New Age*, many contributors to *G.K.'s Weekly* were well known writers like George Bernard Shaw, Compton Mackenzie, or H.G. Wells.²³⁵

The essence of Distributism was corporatism. It was argued that modern mass production should if possible be avoided or at least organised on a corporate basis with every worker having a stake in the business. Usury was to be outlawed.²³⁶ There was a place for Jews in the co-operative state, as long as they were confined to their own guilds and societies.²³⁷ Distributism stood for the individual's liberty from the state and the protection of private property. However, it also paradoxically supported the confiscation of land (in order for it to be re-distributed) and deplored the workers' alienation through exploitative employers. Distributists objected to eugenics for similar reasons. They interpreted it as another form of class war whereby the middle-class regulated the lower classes by means of birth-control and sterilisation.²³⁸

On 17 September 1926, Chesterton founded the Distributist League in order to put Distributist principles into action as the core of a possible party or pressure group. In reality, however, the existence of the League served a more mundane purpose: it paid for the publication of *G.K.'s Weekly*, which had got into financial difficulties soon after its foundation. Membership subscriptions, donations and other monies went almost entirely into securing the survival of the journal.

While *G.K.'s Weekly* was the philosophical heart of Distributism, the geographical heart of the League was the Central Branch in London, where the core of the League met in a public house, the Devreux's, for talks, discussions, and drinks. The various secretaries of the League came overwhelmingly from a non-literary middle-class

²³⁵ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 105

²³⁶ Sewell: *Catholics*, p. 53. Also Hilaire Belloc: *Usury*, London, 1931.

²³⁷ *NW*, 26.10.1911, p. 589.

²³⁸ League pamphlet: KL Kenrick: 'The War on the Weak. Some objections to Eugenic legislation', ca. 1930. CI, League Publications.

background. Many were businessmen, engineers or civil servants – only two were Catholic. At times G.K. Chesterton, president of the League, would join the meeting, cheered and revered by those present. Although some members of the League (particularly those active in the Land Movement) denounced the Central Branch as a mere drinking club, most Distributists agreed that these gatherings helped to crystallise and spread Distributist ideas, not least because of Chesterton's charisma and brilliant rhetoric. Public meetings and other public relations enterprises attracted enthusiastic crowds who came to hear the leaders of the movement, G.K. Chesterton and Belloc, speak. The Distributists were also visible in London's streets, demonstrating, for example, against the centralisation of London's transport, or backing the miners in the General Strike in 1926.

Another way of promoting their aims was through parliamentary lobbying, as suggested by Belloc. For a few years, the League supported the Labour Party, seeing in it an ally in the fight against monopoly capital and for the rights of the working men. Henry Slessor, Labour MP since 1924, was a vocal representative of the League's principles in the House of Commons. The League's political ambitions remained, however, unfulfilled. From 1931, Arthur Currie and a considerable number of Distributists from the Land Movement were pushing for a Distributist Party.²³⁹ This put the unity of the League under severe strain. By that time, Chesterton and the Central Branch were strongly opposed to Currie's plan of turning the League into a political party and thus playing the parliamentary game they so despised.

Another Distributist offspring was the Catholic Land Movement, welcomed and supported by Chesterton.²⁴⁰ This back-to-the-land movement set up small farms with their related secondary trades to create completely self-sufficient Catholic rural communities which would serve as a springboard for the emergence of an

²³⁹ Minutes Central Branch Meeting, 30.10.1931; and Minutes Extraordinary Meeting of the Central Branch, 13.11.1931. AM Currie, strongly in favour of a Distributist Party, implied 'that politics was the best policy. The only way the ordinary Englishmen would take politics was in the traditional popular way.' CI, Minute Book. The League. Central Branch Committee London.

²⁴⁰ It was only open for Catholics. The reasons given for this restriction were 1) first duty to fellow Catholics; 2) the village communities would be centred around the Church 3) 'the element of discipline necessary to its success can only be found in the common beliefs and loyalties of Catholics'. In: 'A Catholic Farming Co-operative Movement For England', AAL Downey Collection Series 1, XI Societies, Land Movement.

independent peasantry. This revival of English agriculture was to be the saviour of the nation, the saviour from national bankruptcy and immorality ('the service of God rather than the service of Mammon').²⁴¹ Behind the economic motives (the reduction of unemployment; economic self-sufficiency; the breaking up of monopolies) lay strong moral considerations.²⁴² The communities envisaged by the Catholic Land Movement embodied an ideal of a close-knit moral community in which religion and the Church still played a vital role.²⁴³ The more important aim, however, was to stop the 'leakage' of young urban unemployed Catholics to socialist groups.²⁴⁴

The Catholic Land Movement won the hierarchy's warmest support, particularly for the moral considerations mentioned above.²⁴⁵ The bishops presided over the Catholic Land Associations in their diocese. Their support usually entailed the promotion of the movement in public and the bishops' participation at conferences. However, support by the hierarchy did not include regular funding and money coming in from the bishops began to dry up from 1936 onwards.²⁴⁶

3.2.2.2 *Distributist Worldview. From Democracy to Fascism*

The ideological roots of Distributism go back to the *Witness* publications of Hilaire Belloc described in Chapter Two. In a letter to his mother on the occasion of his conversion to Catholicism, G.K. Chesterton mentioned that he intended continuing his brother Cecil's publicist work: 'I think, as Cecil did, that the fight for the family

²⁴¹ Herbert Shove: *The Catholic Land Movement. Its Aims and Methods*, CTS Pamphlet, London, 1932, pp. 20-22.

²⁴² Fr Vincent McNabb: *The Catholic Land Movement and its Motives*, CTS Pamphlet, London 1932, p. 11, p. 13. Unemployment was particularly high in the north east and north west of England. For 1929, the year where the first Catholic Land Association was founded, the rates stood at 13.7% and 13.3% respectively. This regional unemployment rate rose during the early 1930s, reaching a peak in the north east in 1932 with 28.5% unemployment, in the north west in 1931 with 28.2%. Unemployment also rose in the Midlands in the early 1930s, reaching a peak in 1931 with 20.3%, while the rate in London was considerably lower, 5.6% in 1929 and 13.5% in 1931. Sean Glynn, Alan Booth: *Modern Britain. An Economic and Social History*, London 1996, p. 91.

²⁴³ H. Robbins, who managed the Catholic Land Association in Birmingham, also stressed the importance of the religious element in the movement. Religion would give those involved the consolation and strength to continue their work. More generally, however, religion was seen as a necessary foundation for 'complete and rounded communities'. H. Robbins: 'A Land Movement', *GKW*, 3.8.1933, pp. 349-51.

²⁴⁴ 'A Catholic Farming Co-operative Movement for England' (n.d., but probably 1932), AAL Downey Collection Series 1, XI.

²⁴⁵ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 184.

²⁴⁶ Documents in BAA, AP / M18 Midland Catholic Land Association, and letter HEG Rope to O'Brian Donaghue, 3.6.1937, CI, Miscellaneous Correspondence.

and the free citizen and everything decent must now be waged by one fighting form of Christianity.’²⁴⁷

The movement shared with the *Witness* publications three main objections to modern British society: the parliamentary system, monopoly capitalism and the credit system. The parliamentary system in Britain was, in the eyes of Distributists, no longer a democracy, but had degenerated into a plutocracy marred by corruption which largely operated to the advantage of the ‘foreign financier’. The movement’s criticism of capitalism deplored the exploitation of employees and workers and feared the political influence of industrialists (and thereby the further destruction of English democracy). In a more metaphysical interpretation, modern capitalism was seen as advocate of materialism, inimical to the spiritual traditions of England. Distributists instead preferred a society in which everyone was an owner. This would secure the citizens’ liberty and independence, and eventually foster a truly democratic society. Above all, Distributist reforms aimed to forestall Britain’s slide into socialism.

The movement’s nationalism has been easily forgotten by historians in favour of its anti-socialism and anti-capitalism. However, most statements and publications speak of a concern over English traditions. When HE Humphries declared in the Distributist Handbook that ‘only the English can save the English’ he referred to Distributism as salvation and to unwarranted foreign influence in British politics as the problem.²⁴⁸ A return to ‘Englishness’ would stop society’s decline into materialism and secularism. The rejuvenation of the peasantry (in the form of the Catholic Land Movement) as the source of a healthy population was essential to England’s revival.²⁴⁹ This longing for the nation’s rebirth is not far from the *Rechtskatholiken’s* *völkisch* outlook.

Despite the distaste for (what they described as) ‘plutocracy’, the Distributist League and *G.K.’s Weekly* did not turn to fascism straight away. For many years, members of the Distributist League had assured their support for democracy. Their definition

²⁴⁷ Field: ‘Antisemitism with the Boots off’, p. 298. Letter G.K. Chesterton to his mother, (n.d.), CI, Letter from the British Library.

²⁴⁸ HE Humphries: *Liberty and Property. An Introduction to Distributism*, London, 1928, p. 39.

²⁴⁹ According to this, ‘Englishness’ was to be found in Shakespeare’s England or in the ancient (corporate) organisation of the ‘Hundreds’. ‘Property and Freedom or Wealth and Slavery?’ A paper given by Mr C O’Brian Donaghue to the Birmingham Social Credit Group at Queen’s College, Birmingham, 8.11.1933. CI, Notes and Articles by CF O’Brian Donaghue. For G.K. Chesterton nationality and ‘Englishness’ was bound to one place. His quasi-religious definition of nationality also meant that Jews could never be English. Cheyette: *Constructions of ‘the Jew’*, p. 184, p. 203.

of democracy, however, was broad and also considered an oligarchy in the form of a 'Directorate' as a democratic form of government as long as the representatives were democratically elected. However, by 1929, the leadership of the League had grown tired of parliamentary politics once it was clear how limited the League's political influence was.²⁵⁰ Alternatives to parliamentarianism were sought. At first the advantages of a monarchy seemed appealing, but their preference for a traditional monarchy was gradually abandoned in favour of a 'popular monarchy' in the style of Mussolini.²⁵¹ In August 1935, Chesterton conceded that he personally was willing to look into fascism, whereas parliamentarianism was not worth looking into at all. He also observed that 'many' English fascists were Distributists, and 'some' were Catholics.²⁵²

Indeed, until Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia, the majority of Distributists were largely united in their respect for fascist Italy (apart from Slessor, Gill and McNabb, who never approved of Mussolini). However, Abyssinia split the Distributists into two factions. While many members of the League were appalled by Mussolini's attack and denounced it as 'Prussian imperialism' by a 'Latin practitioner', people close to Belloc such as Douglas Jerrold and Gregory Macdonald welcomed the Abyssinian war. Caught in the middle, Chesterton tried to accommodate the two factions by criticising the war but not Mussolini's fascism.²⁵³ One former Distributist, writing in 1954, recalled the mood within the movement during the Abyssinian war:

I can remember how shocked we all were by this. He [G.K. Chesterton] even made some half-hearted defence of Musso. on the score that Abyss. was being exploited by the capitalists, and that Musso was coming to her rescue. I agree with you that it was due to Italy being a Roman Catholic nation. I am not quite sure but I have an idea that the Pope

²⁵⁰ At the time, G.K. Chesterton was president of the League, part of the executive committee were Hilaire Belloc, W. Blackie, Alan Bland, Mrs Cecil Chesterton, Cedric Chivers, AM Currie, Mrs E. Gordon Dunham, Maurice Reckitt, WR Titterton, Captain HSD Went. George Heseltine was secretary. CI, *The League*. Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 122.

²⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 122.

²⁵² Cited in Morris: 'Catholic Writers I', p. 37.

²⁵³ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 190. G.K. Chesterton's attitude towards Mussolini has been contested by historians ever since Maisie Ward's defence of her literary hero. Maisie Ward: *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, Regensburg, 1956. Yet in the case of the Abyssinian war, both the articles of G.K.'s *Weekly* (which Chesterton still edited from his sick-bed) and the recollection of some Distributists suggest that he supported Mussolini's Ethiopian adventure.

blessed the enterprise. G.K. was far too logical in his orthodoxy to disapprove of anything of a moral nature which his infallible mentor had passed as being right.²⁵⁴

Abyssinia eventually split the Distributist League, silencing the moderate wing, while the opinions of G.K.'s *Weekly* triumphed in the paper, the League and the Land Movement. Support for Mussolini was only the overture to an increasingly pro-fascist and the more moderate members of the League eventually left after Chesterton's death in 1936.²⁵⁵

For the time being, fascist sympathies remained limited to an adulation of Mussolini as the one who had implemented Distributist ideals and revived Rome as the citadel of Christianity.²⁵⁶ The home-grown fascism of the British Union of Fascists and the Imperial Fascist League was still viewed with caution. Distributists were impressed by the BUF's activism and suggested that British fascists might come to see themselves as Distributists, but remained wary of the fascists' emphasis on total state power. Given their similar vision on corporatist economics, authoritarianism, anti-parliamentarianism, and anti-capitalism, there existed some common ground for friendly collaboration. Several representatives of the BUF and the Imperial Fascist League spoke at League meetings and contributed countless letters to 'The Cockpit', the opinion page of G.K.'s *Weekly*, in the late 1920 and early 1930s. It is not surprising that the journal eventually invited British fascists on its forum given that Arnold Lunn, Featherstone Hammond and Douglas Jerrold were members of pro-fascist and pro-Hitler organisations.²⁵⁷

Before the Spanish Civil War, National Socialism and Hitler's persecution of the Jews were also rejected by the majority of Distributists for its totalitarian ambition. Chesterton and Belloc saw in the movement simple Prussianism without boundaries

²⁵⁴ Letter John Cargill to Desmond, 8.6.1954. CI, The Chesterton Society from Rex Mawby. The retrospective account of former League members are often coloured by self-justification, adoration for Chesterton and laying blame at the feet of others. Heseltine, e.g., blamed 'Catholics eager to back Mussolini' and 'Catholics who had not enough to do' for the pro-fascist turn of the League.

²⁵⁵ Jay Corrin: *Catholic Intellectuals and the Challenge of Democracy*, Notre Dame, 2002, p. 218.

²⁵⁶ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, pp. 177-78.

²⁵⁷ A.K. Chesterton, G.K.'s second cousin, contributed a view articles to the *Weekly Review* in 1938/39; as did J.L. Benvenisti (author of *The Absent Minded Revolution*, 1937) with blatant appeals for fascism. A.K. Chesterton had been the editor of the BUF's chief propaganda journals, but had resigned from the party in March 1938 on the grounds that its support for Hitler's Germany was compromising British patriotism. Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 192. On AK's antisemitism see Richard Thurlow: 'Ideology of Obsession on the Model of A.K. Chesterton', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 8 (1974), 23-29.

and sanity. In Chesterton's eyes, the difference between Hitler and a fascist leader was the National Socialists' obsession with race, whereas a fascist simply displayed an excessive devotion to his nation.²⁵⁸

All this changed with the Spanish Civil War, the catalyst of Catholic radicalism in England.²⁵⁹ Many of the leading Distributists had been to Spain and had in some cases met with Franco. Belloc encountered Franco on the battlefield and would later praise him for instilling order, 'patriotism, the traditions of an independent peasantry and, more important than either, religion', in short, Franco was 'the man who has saved us all'.²⁶⁰ His thoughts were soon taken up by his fellow Distributists Douglas Jerrold ('the brains of the English Right', according to the artist Wyndham Lewis²⁶¹), Arnold Lunn, Douglas Woodruff and the publisher Frank Sheed.²⁶² Arnold Lunn ardently supported the Francoist cause in his writings, because it was to him essentially a war between the Catholic and Communist cultures. Douglas Jerrold claimed that he together with Luis Bidwell Bolin (one of the founders of the pro-Franco organisation Friends of Nationalist Spain) had enabled the Nationalist offensive against the Republicans by smuggling Franco, 'a supremely good man, a hero possibly: possibly a saint', out of the Canary Islands on a secret flight to start the military uprising in Morocco.²⁶³

In the eyes of right-wing Distributists, Spain had become the European battleground between socialism and European culture. As Spain was largely a Catholic country, this meant that the Republicans were not simply fighting Franco's Nationalists, but were persecuting and attacking Catholic culture and Catholic communities. Almost replicating the biblical antagonism between Judaism and Christianity, many comments on the Civil War identified the Republicans with international 'Jewish' socialism:

²⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 185.

²⁵⁹ A Hastings: *The Shaping of Prophecy*, p. 78.

²⁶⁰ Robert Speaight: *The life of Hilaire Belloc*, London, 1957, p. 464.

²⁶¹ Cited in Morris: 'Catholic Writers II', p. 82.

²⁶² A comment by James W. Poynter of the CGI in 1929 shows that Belloc had been influential for quite some time: 'What he says is repeated, as a tune is repeated on a gramophone, by a multitude of lesser writers, preachers in Roman Catholic pulpits, young women and young men on Catholic Evidence Guild platforms, and so on.' James W. Poynter: *Hilaire Belloc Keeps the Bridge. An Examination of his Defence of Roman Catholicism*, London, 1929.

²⁶³ The quote is Jerrold's. Morris: 'Catholic Writers II', p. 85. Corrin: *Catholic Intellectuals*, p. 324.

The French Revolution was founded by patriotism and property, the Spanish is founded on Jewish Communism which especially attacks those fundamental ideas of our Western Civilisation. What the two movements have in common is hostility to the Catholic Church, but in the French case that hostility came in from the side, it was incidental [...] but the Communists' attack on the Church is its main activity. That is why it was a good strategy on the part of the Moscow Jews to attack Spain. I think they would have succeeded if it had not been for Franco forestalling them.²⁶⁴

On the basis of such a worldview, Franco, and indeed fascism in general, came to be seen as Christian Europe's only salvation from Russian Bolshevism.

The pro-fascist outlook of *G.K.'s Weekly* deepened after Chesterton's death in 1936 and more so with the journal's relaunch as *Weekly Review* in 1938. By then Belloc had grown tired of the journal, although he continued to contribute an article for almost every issue. In a letter in September 1937 he wrote: 'I am glad I am no longer responsible for *G.K.'s Weekly*. I promised to write for them regularly, but it's a magnet for cranks, has no capital and can hardly survive.'²⁶⁵ The journal now tended to promote an authoritarian policy for Britain and openly supported the political programme of the BUF and at times even Hitler. For example, in mid-1939, the *Review* opposed the looming war against Germany, alleging that Jewish financiers were forcing Germany into a world war in order to issue further usurious loans. The journal toned down its fascist bias after Britain had declared war on Germany, although its editors always insisted that British politicians had forced Mussolini into an alliance with Hitler. The *Weekly Review* supported the Allied war effort but consistently emphasised that the number one enemy was the Soviet Union and not Nazi Germany.²⁶⁶

3.2.2.3 Antisemitism

The antisemitism expressed by Belloc and G.K. Chesterton is obvious from their writings and speeches. However, this sentiment was generally not as frankly

²⁶⁴ Belloc in reply to Lunn's letter from 21.5.1938 asking for Belloc's views on the French Revolution as he intended to write a book on communism. Burns Library, Belloc Papers.

²⁶⁵ Robert Speaight (ed.): *Letters from Hilaire Belloc*, London, 1958, p. 265. Apart from Belloc the new editorial board after Chesterton's death included Mrs Cecil Chesterton, TS Eliot and Reginald Jebb (Belloc's son-in-law), the latter two at least were non-Catholics.

²⁶⁶ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 192.

expressed in the Distributist League and the Catholic Land Movement despite their indebtedness to Chesterbelloc literature. Judging from the League's documents, neither the Distributist Handbook nor the League's conferences were especially driven by antisemitic zeal – at least not enough to be recorded in the meetings' minutes. The 'solution' of a 'Jewish question' was not written into the programme of the Distributist League, as it was into that of the *Rechtskatholiken*. Anti-Jewish remarks are often hidden within the text, just visible enough to be detected by the contemporary reader who was familiar with the anti-Jewish discourse of the time. When, for instance, Humphries complained about 'unjustified foreign dominance', he illustrated his concern using the German-born Jewish magnate Alfred Mond as example. Alfred Mond had often been the target of the Edwardian radical right that accused Jews of treasonable activities and manipulation of Lloyd George's government.²⁶⁷ Humphries described how Mond dominated the English part of a German-English chemical combine, the ICI (Imperial Chemical Industries) Trust, and suggested that this was bound to lead to disloyalty towards England, even more so in the case of war.²⁶⁸ These arguments can be traced back to Belloc and Cecil Chesterton, who regularly questioned the loyalty of British Jews to the British crown during the First World War.²⁶⁹

Despite the lack of overt antisemitic statements, antisemitism was not just a minor subplot of Distributism. According to G.K. Chesterton all these things were of a piece: compassion for the poor, and speaking openly about the alleged harmful influence of the Jews.²⁷⁰ Almost unavoidably, society's re-education as offered by *G.K.'s Weekly* and the *Weekly Review* regularly addressed the alleged overwhelming influence of Jews in British politics, in world finance and in Europe's communist movements. On average, two anti-Jewish comments per issue hinted at the 'Jewish question'.²⁷¹ As late as March 1940, contributions to the *Weekly Review* remarked on

²⁶⁷ Mond was also an advisor of Lloyd George after the latter had become Prime Minister in 1916. Thurlow: *Fascism in Britain*, p. 14. p. 47.

²⁶⁸ Humphries: *Liberty*, p. 10. 'The Distributist Conference 1935. Preliminary Notice', CI, Distributist Conferences.

²⁶⁹ This was particularly apparent in their coverage of the Marconi scandal, where Mond was accused of pulling the strings behind Lloyd George. Thurlow: *Fascism in Britain*, p. 68.

²⁷⁰ *NW*, 30.7.1920, p. 242.

²⁷¹ Taken from a cross-section of together sixteen months of the years 1927, 1929, 1933, 1936; and eight months (25 issues) in the period of 1938-40, 1942.

thirteen occasions (to my knowledge) on the alleged negative Jewish influence in left-wing politics, the financial world and on Britain's Palestine policy.²⁷²

The negative stereotype of the Jews in Distributist publications echoed the more general prejudices in Britain about the Jews. However, in the intensity of antisemitic remarks and the tendency to invoke conspiracy theories, the Distributist publications were closer to the radical fringe. Their fear for Christian values and especially Catholic interests on the other hand lent their antisemitism a distinct character, as antisemitism was justified in defence of either national institutions or the interests of the Catholic Church and Christian values. The following paragraphs give a few illustrating examples.

Antisemitic articles were published mostly in *G.K.'s Weekly's* column on international and financial affairs. On these pages the reader was, for instance, informed that Jews profited from the First World War by issuing usurious loans to the Allies and were able to influence the outcome of the Versailles peace negotiations.²⁷³ Mostly written by Belloc, and later by Gregory Macdonald, these sections reflected Belloc's conviction that a secret clique of Jews, whom he called the 'Money Power', was preparing to take control over the world.²⁷⁴ Other radical Distributists such as Douglas Jerrold, AJ Penty, or Gregory Macdonald often followed Belloc's interpretations in their own articles for *G.K.'s Weekly*. An elaborate explanation for Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia was offered by Macdonald and C. Featherstone Hammond (who otherwise mostly wrote on the 'international credit system'). They justified Italy's action by claiming it had been forced to conquer Abyssinia by 'Jewish Money Power', meaning Wall Street. These conspirators aimed to monopolise the world's wealth, and an important step in this direction was to make the major European economies completely dependent on American finances. This was gained by extended loans to these countries only to force them eventually off the gold standard under the pressure of American moneylenders. Britain was one victim and Italy would be the next. In order to escape

²⁷² *WR*, 7.3.1940, pp. 421-33, p. 431, p. 436. *WR*, 14.3.1940, pp. 439-40, p. 449-50. *WR*, 21.3.1940, p. 462. *WR*, 28.3.1940, p. 5, pp. 8-9, p. 11.

²⁷³ *GKW*, 31.10.1925, p. 3.

²⁷⁴ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 187.

that financial siege, Italy had to look outside the dollar market and the capitalist oil monopoly for raw materials in Abyssinia.²⁷⁵

Antisemitic comments also appeared almost without fail in Belloc's articles written in defence of the Catholic Church or Catholic countries such as France or Poland. Antisemitic outbursts in Poland were largely excused by Belloc, because he thought it was simply defending itself against the influence of Polish or German Jews. Germany's post-war settlement was, on the other hand, engineered by French freemasons and the powers of international Jewish bankers. According to Belloc, these powers prevented the creation of Catholic states along the Danube and Rhine, and in their hatred of the Roman Church favoured instead the resurrection of anti-Catholic Prussia.²⁷⁶

The Catholic Land Movement was also pre-occupied with the two extremes of excessive capitalism and socialism. Phrases such as the 'ravenous financier', the 'Blood Brothers' of 'joint stock companies and the Soviet committees'²⁷⁷ or the 'BrYiddish Empire' demonstrate this.²⁷⁸ An anti-Jewish sentiment mostly lay implicitly behind such phrases, but could also be more explicit at times. For instance, the journal of the Catholic Land Association, *Land for the People*, alleged in 1931 that British financial policy was dictated by 'foreign financiers' and condoned by 'patriotic Jews' to 'suit their own purses'.²⁷⁹ Yet overall overt antisemitism was not expressed as frequently as in *G.K.'s Weekly*. How nationalism, pro-fascism and antisemitism could go hand in hand was demonstrated in a collection of articles that sought to explain the motives behind such a movement. It was prepared in summer 1933 and published in 1934 with a statement by Cardinal Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli in which he expressed his whole-hearted support for the Catholic Land

²⁷⁵ *GKW*, 24.10.1935, p. 3; *GKW*, 17.10.1935, p. 3.

²⁷⁶ Belloc in *GKW*, 9.11.1929. Similar: Chesterton in *GKW*, 28.12.1929. Both cited in Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 175, p. 177.

²⁷⁷ Antisemitic remarks in the movement's journals, *Land for the People*, occurred at times, yet not as often as in *G.K.'s Weekly*. *Land for the People* was initially the mouthpiece of the Scottish Catholic Land Movement (first published in January 1930), but was soon adopted by all Catholic Land Associations. For examples in speeches see 'Report written by a Wood Worker [O'Brian Donaghue] on Westfield Training Farm on Distributism', and O'Brian Donaghue's correspondence. CI, Notes and Articles by CF O'Brian Donaghue.

²⁷⁸ Letter HEG Rope to O'Brian Donaghue, 3.6.1937. CI, Notes and Articles by CF O'Brian Donaghue.

²⁷⁹ *Land for the People*, October 1931, pp. 2-3.

Movement.²⁸⁰ Several contributors expressed sympathy for current Italian and German economic and social policies, because they spelled the 'end of the commercialist era and necessitates a return in all countries to the principle of putting primary production back into its right place in the social organism'.²⁸¹ Rev HEG Rope maintained that the Catholic Land Movement was not arbitrary, 'but necessary, indeed a matter of life and death for England, for civilisation, for humanity. [...] Instead of Utopia we desire an English England. [...] As Christians our ideal is an England of free citizens, with owners and handicraftsmen forming the great bulk of the population, the former in a large majority, and no more of the trading element than is necessary to the nation's well-being.' Citing Fr Cahill's *Freemasonry and the Antichristian Movement* (1930) he warned against Jewish dominance as alleged in the 'Protocols of Zion':

This is not the place to discuss the authorship and date of the *Protocols*. It is enough that they agree with what is known from other sources as to Judeo-Masonic aims, and as a manifestation of those aims have been vindicated by events wherever the secret societies' power has been effective. We invite attention to these words: 'What we want is that industry should drain off from the land both labour and capital and by means of speculation transfer into our hands all the money of the world, and thereby throw all the *goyim* into the ranks of the proletariat.'²⁸²

The Spanish Civil War accelerated *G.K.'s Weekly's* embrace of fascism. The journal continued to laud Franco and Mussolini, ignored Hitler's excesses and highlighted instead what was considered to be the greatest danger: Bolshevism.²⁸³ Its hostility towards Jews grew with the increasing dichotomy of its worldview, where socialism was the embodiment of evil and fascist dictators were celebrated as saviours. Up to the Spanish Civil War, Jews featured regularly as the influential and anti-Catholic financier. The stereotype of the 'Jewish Bolshevik' had been evoked by the editors of *G.K.'s Weekly* before the outbreak of the Civil War, but now received central attention. The journal consequently portrayed the conflict in Spain as a holy war

²⁸⁰ *Flee to the Fields: The Faith and Works of the Catholic Land Movement. A Symposium*, London, 1934.

²⁸¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 50-51

²⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 195, p. 209.

²⁸³ Also Brian Cheyette who observed that Belloc's antisemitism became 'increasingly fantastic' with its new focus on the Spanish Civil War, Hitler's Germany and Palestine. Cheyette: *Constructions of 'the Jew'*, p. 178. After 1936, Belloc began to describe Hitler as a manifestation of 'revived monarchialism': National Socialism was like Italian fascism, an authoritarian movement in defence of Europe's common culture against atheist Bolshevik revolution. Britain, according to *G.K.'s Weekly*, should consequently form an alliance with Hitler and Mussolini against Soviet Russia. *GKW*, 27.9.1936, p. 2.

between 'world finance; world Jewry [...] world masonry [...] world socialism' and Europe's basic cultural traditions.²⁸⁴

The antisemitism in *G.K.'s Weekly* was not a mere public relations strategy of a financially ailing weekly paper. There was instead a strong element of conviction to it, especially if one considers that those authors in Distributist publications who propagated the 'Jew-Bolshevik' or the 'Jewish financier' stereotype – Arnold Lunn, Douglas Jerrold, Hilaire Belloc, HEG Rope and Stanley B. James – did so in other publications and public forums too. Kester Aspden has pointed to the ideological dimension of English Catholics' anti-socialism with its antisemitic undercurrent.²⁸⁵ The assessment of the journal's antisemitism by Gregory Macdonald supports this interpretation. *G.K.'s Weekly's* former columnist on finance and Poland eventually conceded in 1986 that the paper 'as a whole' had antisemitic and anti-American tones. These currents, Macdonald claimed in 1986, were 'a carry-over from the *New Witness*, Belloc and Titterton being from the earlier generation'.²⁸⁶ Referring to his own earlier involvement with the *Weekly* he declared:

No doubt I conducted all the unfortunate controversies in entirely the wrong way, but I thought and still think that there were certain Chestertonian principles to be upheld which were not entirely appreciated by others.²⁸⁷

The most important component of the editors' antisemitism was their anti-socialism (particularly apparent in their reaction to the Spanish Civil War). However, the preservation of Christian religious values, especially the defence of Catholicism, cannot be divorced from that. As shown before, most statements in support of Mussolini or Franco referred to the dictators' contributions to the restoration of the Church against anti-clerical forces. Anti-Jewish invectives were usually followed by a reminder of the Jews' 'traditional hostility' towards Christianity. This axiom

²⁸⁴ Macdonald in, *GKW*, 20.8.36, p. 5. See also the retrospective on the events of the Spanish Civil War and its press coverage in Britain in the March 1939 issues of the *Weekly Review*. Almost all comments on 'Jewish influence' refer to the Popular Fronts in Spain and France, on Russian influence, and on the British press.

²⁸⁵ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 213. On Belloc and Chesterton and the connection between pro-fascism and antisemitism see Sewell: *Catholics*, pp. 71-73.

²⁸⁶ Letter Gregory Macdonald to Michael Sewell, 28.8.1986, CI, Letters from Gregory Macdonald. On Chesterton and fascism see special issue *Chesterton Review*, 25 (1999), no. 1 & 2.

²⁸⁷ Letter Gregory Macdonald to J. Walsh, 17.12.1949. CI, Letters from Gregory Macdonald.

stayed with some authors until late in their lives. Gregory Macdonald, for instance confessed in 1986, that:

In the matter of the Jews I am not crazily ecumenical. The Synagogue has been jostling the Church since the days of Saul of Tarsus. But we are living in mysterious times. With the recovery of Jerusalem at the end of the Six Day War, and the increasing apostasy of the gentiles, we may see the recognition of the Messiah.²⁸⁸

3.2.3 *Success and Influence of Distributism*

Despite the ridiculing of the League by contemporaries as a 'Two Acres and a Cow' movement, the League struck a cord with middle-class professionals who feared for their incomes and status. League enthusiasts saw in Distributism an opportunity to steer clear from excessive capitalism (on which they blamed their misfortune) and socialism, which they feared.²⁸⁹ By December 1926, Distributist branches had been established in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Chatham, Liverpool, Oxford, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Within the next few years the movement became well known beyond the boundaries of Great Britain, with branches in the United States, Australia, South Africa and Canada. The land movement on the other hand was truly popular with lower-middle and working-class Catholics in Britain who responded enthusiastically to this new enterprise. There was a long waiting list of buyers for small plots of land just ten weeks after the Marydown Farm of TWC Curd and Fr Dey was registered. By 1934 there were six associations, among others in Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and London.²⁹⁰

Like the *Rechtskatholiken*, the Distributists never managed to form a political party and consequently left no trace on Britain's political stage. The disputes surrounding the creation of a party, and even more so the fall-out over Mussolini's Abyssinian adventure, diminished the League's political impact further. Even Chesterton's aim

²⁸⁸ Letter G Macdonald to Michael Sewell, 28.8.1986. Ibidem.

²⁸⁹ See, e.g., the letter by Duratt Bishop, Sevenacres to Strong, 28.8.1935. According to Arthur Currie, the League specifically tried to address a conservative middle-class audience with its programme. Letter Currie to Heseltine, 14.5.1933. Both letters in: CI, The Distributist League misc letters to the Hon Secretaries Heseltine & Mawby 1926-40.

²⁹⁰ The single Catholic land organisations were loosely joined together by the Catholic Land Federation with Rev Msgr Dey as chairman and Belloc's son-in-law Reginald Jebb as secretary. Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 150.

to re-educate the British public through *G.K.'s Weekly* looks like a failure. The journal only sold 8,000 copies per issue and was constantly low in funds.

As in the case of the *Rechtskatholiken*, however, Chesterton's success cannot be assessed by facts and figures alone. Chesterton and Belloc were the most influential Catholic intellectuals in the 1930s. In this role they were ideal 'multipliers' and managed to attract many intellectuals and Catholic lay leaders to their cause. Distributism became so popular with Catholic intellectuals that Msgr Parkinson, founder of the Catholic Social Guild, complained to Fr O'Hea that the Distributists were draining the Guild of their most creative writers and thinkers.²⁹¹ In order to make themselves heard, Chesterbelloc sympathisers could furthermore rely on the national Catholic newspapers. The main papers, *The Tablet*, *Catholic Herald*, the *Catholic Times*, and occasionally the Jesuits' *The Month*, regularly featured articles by Distributists and left some space for Distributist branch news. The *Catholic Times* opened its columns to the more radical Distributists, such as Gregory Macdonald, Arnold Lunn, HEG Rope and Belloc himself. In 1926, the *Catholic Herald* published an article series by Belloc and G.K. Chesterton on capitalism, big business and Catholics, and in January 1939 the paper announced that Belloc and Douglas Jerrold would contribute weekly articles on Spain, Italy and Germany.²⁹² All of them also published in *The Universe*. Further, Lunn was at the time co-editing *The Catholic Times*, Douglas Jerrold joined the *Catholic Herald* in 1938 while Michael de la Bédoyère, the *Herald's* editor, occasionally supported Jerrold's pro-fascist opinion in his paper.²⁹³

Apart from their journalistic work, it should also be observed that Arnold Lunn, Douglas Jerrold and Hilaire Belloc were part of the wider Catholic community. Belloc had toured the country for years, giving talks on Distributism, capitalism or the Catholic Church in front of various Catholic lay organisations. TWC Curd, another believer in Jewish conspiracy, was the organising secretary of the Catholic Truth Society (CTS), a member of the Knights of St Columba and head of the Marydown land association.

²⁹¹ The CSG, the most important agency of Catholic social thought up to the mid 1920s, was a persistent critic of Distributism, disagreeing with Belloc's concept of the 'servile state' and his attack on modern industrial society. Ibidem, p. 179.

²⁹² Announced in *Catholic Herald*, 24.7.1926, the series was published in four parts. For their reports on fascist Europe see, e.g., *Catholic Herald*, 20.1.1939, p. 6.

²⁹³ Morris: 'Catholic Writers II', p. 88.

Frank Sheed (1897-1981), proprietor of the Catholic publishing house Sheed & Ward, remarked in his autobiography:

Like the majority of Catholics of the English tongue I wanted Franco to win. We did not know much about conditions in Spain, but as between people who murdered priests and nuns and people who didn't, we preferred those who didn't. It was practically a reflex reaction.²⁹⁴

The historian and editor of the *Dublin Review*, Christopher Dawson (1889-1970), had also viewed fascism as a viable alternative to liberal democracy.²⁹⁵ In his *Religion and the Modern State*, Dawson reasoned that fascism was closer to Catholicism than either socialism or democracy, though he also made clear that Mussolini's Italy was unacceptable because it was too statist.²⁹⁶ Catholic writers and intellectuals applauded fascism to varying degrees, including its elitism, corporatist economics, and on occasion even its brutality. Chesterton, for example, condoned Mussolini's violence, because he felt there was no other way to deal with the 'secrecy' of his opponents.²⁹⁷ The learned discourse among the English Catholic clergy also tended to idealise fascism. A well-known example is Ronald Knox, the most prominent clerical voice of his day and a friend of Belloc and Chesterton, who wrote on the Spanish Civil War in 1937: 'Was General Franco justified in plunging his country into the certain horrors of Civil War to avoid the possible horrors of a Communist or an anarchist dictatorship? For myself I don't think there is any doubt he was.' However, three years later in his pamphlet *Nazi and Nazarene*, he criticised fascism in the form of National Socialism. Kevin Morris has suggested that Knox did not criticise National Socialism for what it was politically, but because it had infringed the rights of the Church, namely that it had mixed religion with politics.²⁹⁸ As in the case of the editors of *G.K.'s Weekly*, the Spanish Civil War was to these

²⁹⁴ Frank Sheed: *The Church and I*, New York, 1974, p. 199; cited in: Flint: 'Must God go Fascist?', p. 368. Sheed was born in Australia, where he studied law, before he settled in London in the early 1920s. He set up Sheed & Ward together with his wife Mary Ward in 1927. Six years later they opened an office in New York. Sheed & Ward is seen as the publishing house that had the 'best Catholic writers in Britain' on its list. J. Gillow: *Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics*, London, 1971, p. 688.

²⁹⁵ Corrin: *Catholic Intellectuals*, pp. 181-82. Dawson converted to Catholicism in 1914.

²⁹⁶ Morris: 'Catholic Writers I', p. 42. Mathew Grimley: 'Christopher Dawson and Christian Critics of Democracy', unpublished seminar paper, Oxford, 2002, p. 6. I am grateful to Mathew Grimley for his paper. Grimley also cautions us not to label converts like Dawson as 'Catholic writers'. In his opinion this term is too narrow and does not take into account their cultural and theological (mostly Anglican) influences before their conversion (p. 2).

²⁹⁷ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, pp. 177-78.

²⁹⁸ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 218. Both quotes by Knox in: Morris: 'Catholic Writers II', p. 84.

Catholics ‘a crusade – God versus the devil’, or ‘a struggle between the creeds of Christ and Marx’. It was necessary to fight ‘the anti-Christ’ in Spain to prevent communism from overpowering Europe.²⁹⁹ What vexed many Catholic intellectuals even more was that in their view no-one else seemed to see the danger, since much of the British public and the major newspapers were in favour of the Spanish Republicans. With the ongoing persecution of the Jews in Germany and eventually *Kristallnacht*, nobody seemed to heed what was clearly – to them – a persecution of Catholics.³⁰⁰ Moreover, numerous ordinary Catholics sympathised with or joined socialist parties, which reinforced the perceived danger.

In his assessment of the Catholic media and their position on Spain and fascism, James Flint could only single out *The Sower* and *The Blackfriars* as critics of fascism.³⁰¹ Most Catholic newspapers and journals were pro-Franco and gave fascism the benefit of the doubt, at times spicing their articles with antisemitic remarks (of the Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy kind). This was true not only for the popular weeklies such as the *Catholic Herald* and the *Catholic Times* (as shown in Chapter I), but also for the renowned Jesuit journal *The Month* as well as *The Tablet*, the Catholic middle-classes’ favourite read.³⁰² Not surprisingly many of the regular authors on Spanish issues were Distributists. Douglas Woodruff, editor of *The Tablet* since 1936, and Christopher Hollis, on *The Tablet’s* board of directors, looked favourably upon Distributism, Franco and Mussolini. *The Tablet* argued its case in favour of fascism. In July 1938, it published the antisemitic pro-Franco poem ‘A Legionary Speaks’ by Roy Campbell.³⁰³ Woodruff also contracted Belloc, Gertrude Godden, Arnold Lunn and Douglas Jerrold as correspondents for *The Tablet’s*

²⁹⁹ Stated in letters to Archbishop Amigo of Southwark. Archives of the Archdiocese of Southwark (AAS), Spanish Civil War Records.

³⁰⁰ E.g., according to Belloc, it was necessary ‘to emphasise the magnitude of Franco and the main causes of his success; that is, to point out what our deplorable native press cannot understand’. Letter by Belloc to Woodruff, March 1938, Burns Library, Belloc Papers.

³⁰¹ Flint: ‘Must God go Fascist?’, p. 368.

³⁰² *The Month*, e.g., wrote that the Republicans represented ‘the imported Communism of Slav and Jew’ whose object it was to overthrow Catholic religion. *The Month*, August 1936, pp. 437-45. See also Preston who gives considerable weight to *The Tablet’s* influence, the conservative papers and the Right Book Club on the pro-Franco view of the middle-classes. Cited in Morris: ‘Catholic Writers II’, p. 87.

³⁰³ *The Tablet*, 15.7.1938, as cited by Morris: ‘Catholic Writers II’, p. 69. Also Flint: ‘Must God go Fascist?’, p. 371. The South African convert poet and journalist Roy Campbell was another ardent supporter of Franco and believer in a Judeo-Bolshevik-masonic conspiracy. Morris: ‘Catholic Writers II’, p. 85. Until the 1960s he was recommended on Catholic schools’ reading lists and part of a Catholic cultural canon. Sewell: *Catholics*, p. 245.

reports from Spain's Civil War.³⁰⁴ Consequently, reporting was often in favour of Franco, Mussolini, or the Portuguese dictator Salazar. *The Tablet* also advocated the adoption of an authoritarian corporatist state system in Britain and supported Belloc in his vision of restoring a strong monarchy.³⁰⁵

Edward Norman's opinion that English Catholics were too English to be supportive of fascism has been shown by later historians to be over-optimistic.³⁰⁶ Pro-fascist sympathies reached considerably beyond the literary world of the Chesterbelloc groups. The sympathies of the English hierarchy, clergy, and the Catholic press (with the exception of *The Sower*, *The Blackfriars* and *The Catholic Worker*) for Mussolini, Salazar, Franco, the Austrian leader Engelbert Dollfuss and occasionally for Hitler gradually emerged.³⁰⁷ As in British society in general, support for Franco's campaign in Spain was particularly strong among conservative and / or middle/upper-class Catholics. Catholic aristocrats did not hesitate to speak out on the Spanish Civil War but refrained from any active involvement such as sponsoring or joining relief funds for political reasons. This would have contradicted the non-intervention policy of the British government. The Earl of Iddesleigh much regretted this decision as his 'sympathies (were), of course, with Franco'.³⁰⁸ Franco's photograph for a long time adorned the desk of Cardinal Hinsley. Grateful for the photograph, Hinsley wrote to Franco: 'I look upon you as the great defender of the true Spain, the country of Catholic principles where social justice and charity will be applied for the common good under a firm peace-loving government.'³⁰⁹ The majority of the bishops were sympathetic to Mussolini (particularly since the Lateran Treaty in 1929) and Franco.³¹⁰ Bishop Casartelli in Salford, who was in Rome at the

³⁰⁴ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 192. Letter by Belloc to Woodruff, March 1938, Burns Library, Belloc Papers. On Gertrude Godden see her books on communism in Spain and Britain: *Conflict in Spain, 1920-1937. A Documented Record*, London, 1937; and *Communist Attack on the People of Great Britain*, 2nd edn, London, 1938.

³⁰⁵ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 192.

³⁰⁶ Edward Norman: *Roman Catholicism in England*, Oxford, 1983, p. 119 as quoted in Morris: 'Catholic Writers I', p. 40.

³⁰⁷ Hastings: 'English Catholicism', pp. 77-79. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 205, p. 239.

³⁰⁸ One such fund was, e.g., the Universe Fund for Spain by Sir Martin Melvin, a Catholic industrialist, and proprietor of *The Universe*, and enthusiast for the Catholic Land Movement. Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 68. He also mentions Lord Rankeillour and Arthur Hope.

³⁰⁹ Morris: 'Catholic Writers II', p. 83. Moloney mentions that Hinsley was personally pro-Franco. Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 71.

³¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 50. One should not over-emphasise Hinsley's criticism of Mussolini as remarkable in its defiance of Rome. It was very much in line with Pius XI's encyclical *Catholic Action* in which he

time of Mussolini's putsch, admired the orderliness of the Blackshirts.³¹¹ The propensity towards fascism among English Catholics referred mostly to the 'Latin' versions in Italy and later in Spain (rarely so to Portugal and Austria). Sympathies for Hitler's Germany were less ostensibly paraded. National Socialism in the eyes of most Catholics was pagan Prussianism, the old enemy in a new disguise.³¹²

The boundaries were less clear-cut in the case of homegrown fascism in the form of the British Union of Fascists (BUF). For a long time the bishops neither endorsed nor condemned it – owing largely to the Church's principle of political neutrality, which allowed every Catholic to vote for a (non-socialist) party of his/her liking.³¹³

Hinsley's stance towards British fascism is best assessed from his answers to queries whether Catholics can be fascists. Again, he did not go as far as to condemn the BUF. Fascism was tolerated, wrote Hinsley in a letter in 1938, because of anti-communism, but Catholics had to reject fascism's totalitarianism and its Jew-baiting.³¹⁴ Hinsley also had a very specific reason to advise Catholics not to support fascism. He felt it was unpatriotic and did not further the cause of the Catholic Church in England.³¹⁵ A good example is Hinsley's letter to MGS Sewell, tertiary of the Order of St Dominic, Distributist and BUF sympathiser:

[N]o Catholic can give his loyalty and warship to the man-made god of exaggerated nationalism or racialism. Undoubtedly there is much in the social and economic system of Fascism which is sound and much good has been done in Italy by the present regime. [...] Truth is in the middle course, error in the extreme. [...] [Catholics] may belong to Sir Oswald Mosley's party so long as he does not adopt principles or measures which conflict with Catholic doctrines and Catholic disciplines [...] [but] we dislike the label for ourselves here in England.³¹⁶

accused Italian fascism of state idolatry and violation of the Lateran Treaty. The encyclical was published four years before Hinsley's critical words.

³¹¹ For Casartelli's appraisal see his diary. SDA, Casartelli Papers. Also his comment in: 'The Bishop's Message', *Catholic Federationist*, February 1923, p. 1.

³¹² This distaste should not be interpreted as a consistent public campaign against National Socialism. Events in Germany were for a long time ignored. Especially during the Spanish Civil War contemporary sympathies were with Franco and not with Germany's Jews. Hastings: *The Shaping of Prophecy*, p. 78. Also Merry de Val's 'letter' to Roosevelt in the pro-Nationalist journal *Spain* who found 'the renewal of Jew-baiting, all small if deplorable things compared to the happenings in Spain'. *Spain*, 18.11.1938, p. 5. AAS, Spanish Civil War Records.

³¹³ Letter Clement Bruning to Hinsley, 17.11.1936, (response Private Secretary, 21.11.1936). AAW, Hi 2/76 Fascism 1936-39.

³¹⁴ Hinsley to Harold Brinjes, 15.3.1938. Brinjes was worried about the BUF's recruiting success among his Knights of St Columba colleagues. AAW, Hi 2/76 Fascism 1936-39.

³¹⁵ Hinsley to Fr Gosling (The Sower), 4.2.1939. Ibidem.

³¹⁶ Letter Hinsley to Sewell, 4.2.1939. Ibidem.

Cardinal Hinsley eventually criticised fascism for its totalitarianism in a speech in Birmingham in January 1939. He warned the audience that totalitarianism contravened Catholic moral teaching and should not be supported by Catholics. The speech earned him considerable criticism from Catholics who had already subscribed to fascism. Their argument in favour of fascism (sometimes including National Socialism) was often supported by antisemitic stereotypes, particularly that of the Jewish Bolshevik.³¹⁷ For example, a Mrs Munden blamed especially the German Jews for communism and the events in Spain and Russia. She also felt that the 'Jewish question' was essentially a racial question.³¹⁸

The attraction of fascism amongst the Catholic middle-class, intellectuals, and the hierarchy has been well researched and remains undisputed, unlike the question of how widespread pro-fascist attitudes were amongst the Catholic working class. Adrian Hastings has referred to the strong class divide between a small Catholic upper-class elite and a large working class with Irish connections.³¹⁹ It seems therefore quite unlikely that the pro-fascist discourse of the educated Catholic elite was able to bridge this gap. Indeed, the extent to which Catholic intellectuals could influence their fellow-Catholics has been called into question in the work of James Flint and Kester Aspden. The latter has suggested that their influence is debatable since lay Catholics seemed to show only limited interest in the hierarchy's fervent anti-communist propaganda. A poorly attended lecture by Douglas Jerrold on communism and Spain in Liverpool in 1938, among other incidents, supports this interpretation.³²⁰ Both Flint and Aspden have unearthed Catholic voices critical of their leadership's pro-fascist line. These voices were still a minority but a 'less negligible one than is usually thought'.³²¹ Among the clergy this included Bishop Brown, Auxiliary Bishop of Amigo in Southwark, FH Drinkwater and his educational journal *The Sower*, Fr O'Hea of the Catholic Social Guild, and the Dominicans and their journal *The Blackfriars* for their effort to maintain a neutral

³¹⁷ The Cardinal's secretary tried to assuage such complaints, stressing that Hinsley was only referring to fascism's totalitarianism, not any party in particular nor the ideology in general. Letters and responses Mrs Munden to Hinsley, 5.2.1939; Mrs Hudson, 5.2.193; G Stannard, 5.2.1939. All in *ibidem*.

³¹⁸ Letter Mrs Munden to Hinsley, 5.2.1939. *Ibidem*.

³¹⁹ Hastings: *English Christianity*, p. 70.

³²⁰ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 223, p. 218.

³²¹ Flint: 'Must God go Fascist?', pp. 364-75. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 218.

position.³²² Many Catholic critics of the hierarchy's pro-Franco attitude were involved in social-democratic, Labour or pacifist organisations (as for example, Pax, or the League of Nations, or the Catholic Council for International Relations). The signatories of a memorandum in February 1938 who protested against the bombing of civilian targets by Franco's forces illustrate this quite well. Among them were Fr Gosling of *The Sower*, Virginia Mary Crawford of the CSG, the Labour MP David Adams, Eric Gill, Joseph Clayton, a Fabian, and Conrad Bonacina, the Distributists' research officer.³²³

The Catholic working class in particular has been regarded by historians as anti-fascist.³²⁴ Indeed, these 'ordinary Catholics' seemed to cause considerable concern to those fearful of a 'red menace'. In 1936, Bernard Wall, co-founder of *The Catholic Worker* assured Fr Alfonso de Zulueta (curate at Spanish Place) that he would use all his influence to keep *The Catholic Worker* away from 'liberal tendencies over Spain [...] This I feel is important because, as you know, by far the majority of working class men and women, as distinct from their Catholic leaders, are pro-Caballero.'³²⁵

A further indication of the anti-Franco attitude of many ordinary Catholics was the response of Fr Gosling to Cardinal Hinsley's speech in Birmingham in January 1939:

We know from letters we receive that English Catholics, particularly in the North and from among the middle and working classes, are profoundly disturbed by the attempts that are being constantly made to identify the Catholic Church with the Fascist cause [...] This is doing untold harm; it is alienating the sympathies of our fellow-countrymen, and it is distressing earnest Catholics, who, up to the time of your Birmingham speech, were unable to point to any authoritative denial of the false suggestions.³²⁶

³²² For Bishop Brown, FH Drinkwater and lay initiatives critical of the loud pro-fascist voices see Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 218-24.

³²³ The memorandum stated: 'The Catholic Church in this country has made the cause of the Insurgents its own, and authorities of the Church have identified the cause of the Insurgents with the cause of Christ. We respectfully submit that a grave responsibility rests on the authority of the Church to ensure that the methods employed by the Insurgents do not outrage the teaching of Christ. As Catholics [...] we urge you to take such action as may be appropriate with a view to the immediate cessation of such offences, and with the object of securing the observance of Catholic moral principles by those who claim to fight in the name of the Church.' AAL, Downey Collection 1, VI Diocesan Administration / Communism. Also quoted by Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 222.

³²⁴ Hastings: *English Christianity*, p. 70. Edward Norman: *Roman Catholicism*, p. 119; cited in Morris: 'Catholic writers I', p. 40. Flint: 'Must God go Fascist?', p. 373. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 223, p. 218.

³²⁵ Letter Wall to Alfonso, undated but mid-October 1936. As cited in Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 65.

³²⁶ Letter Gosling to Hinsley, 3.2.1939, AAW, Hi 2 / 76, as cited in Moloney: *Westminster*, pp. 60-61.

The voices of the intellectuals were certainly amplified not only by their fame and literary skill but also by the space granted to them in Catholic newspapers. More crucial, however, were the attempts of the hierarchy to stifle critics of Franco, which gave the Francoists uncontested public space. Sir Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the TUC, for example, received a letter from Hinsley in December 1936 in which the archbishop complained about the pro-Republican pamphlets issued by the National Council of Labour. Hinsley admitted to faults on both sides but saw the anti-Franco campaign as an attack upon the 'Catholic Church, its Head and the hierarchy of Spain'. Such a pamphlet, Hinsley continued, could only result in the alienation of Catholics in England from the Labour Party.³²⁷ Eric Gill experienced a similar rebuke from Hinsley when he asked the archbishop to condemn alleged Nationalist atrocities. Gill was reminded that the Church in England identified itself with the Nationalists, but 'the comparison of the conditions prevailing in Government and Nationalist Spain is more than sufficient excuse for the present attitude of many Catholics in this country.'³²⁸ The aforementioned memorandum of February 1938 was also rejected by the Cardinal because it showed in his opinion 'both lack of discrimination and judgement and lack of loyalty and credulity given to Red propaganda'.³²⁹ Hinsley's response to O'Hanlon, another signatory of the memorandum, was clearest in its support for Nationalist Spain. In it Hinsley rejected O'Hanlon's accusation that the Church had sided with Franco, but continued by adding that the facts would speak against the Republicans:

In National Spain are law, order, security of life and freedom of worship. In Government Spain tens of thousands of innocent people were murdered without any form of trial.³³⁰

Stifled by the English hierarchy and with little media support, apart from an educational journal like *The Sower*, or the Dominicans' *The Blackfriars*, it is not surprising that anti-Franco sentiments were drowned out in public discourse by prominent and eloquent pro-Franco voices.

³²⁷ Hinsley was referring to the pamphlet 'The Drama of Spain' which he found to be generally inaccurate and prejudiced. Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 66.

³²⁸ Letter Hinsley to Gill, 29.8.1936, in Robert Speaight: *The Life of Eric Gill*, New York, 1966, p. 274; as cited in Flint: 'Must God go Fascist?', p. 370.

³²⁹ Cited in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 222.

³³⁰ Letter Hinsley to O'Hanlon in response to his protest letter, 23.2.1938. AAS, Amigo Papers. Spanish Civil War.

The information available to the Catholic public is another factor that must be taken into account when assessing Catholic views of the events surrounding the Spanish Civil War. Most information available on socialism and fascism was very similar, regardless of whether one read *G.K.'s Weekly*, the *Catholic Herald*, information leaflets of the Pro Deo Commission or the publications of the Catholic Truth Society, whose ultimate aim was to warn against the influences of socialism. Catholic information centres and publishing houses close to the hierarchy employed a similar reading of foreign and domestic politics as that offered by Catholic intellectuals.

3.2.4 *Fascism and Anti-Socialism in Catholic Lay Organisations*

As a part of Catholic Action the Pro Deo Commission (PDC) set up in Liverpool in 1937 was to advise the Liverpool Archdiocesan Board of Catholics 'on matters concerning the Communist menace'.³³¹ Other responsibilities included keeping an eye on the political activities of 'suspect' Catholics, and stocking the libraries with politically acceptable books. The Liverpool PDC also co-operated with the BUF and Italian fascism. It approached the Italian Council and the Italian Information Bureau in London to 'secure the wider distribution of literature explaining the true nature of Fascism'.³³² Kester Aspden has explained the fascist sympathies of the Commission by a shared worldview, and in particular a belief in a Judeo-masonic conspiracy.³³³ Msgr Thomas Adamson, Archbishop Downey's secretary, ran the daily business of the Commission. He and Fr Sheppard had already gathered a small group in September 1936 to discuss the 'strength and influence of Communism in the City [Liverpool] and Archdiocese'. They found the results disquieting, since communism seemed to have permeated the trade unions, council schools and even 'seduced Oxford Dons'. Even more disconcerting, in their view, was the observation that more and more young Catholics were drawn to communist ideas. According to the report

³³¹ The records of the Board of Deputies of British Jews suggest that the Pro Deo Commission had its origin with the Vatican and was led by Bishop Noll of Indiana, USA. Protestants were invited to join the Commission. LMA, BO4 CAR16. PDC also existed in Germany. Konrad Algermissen, who had worked for the *Volksverein's* anti-socialist information bureau before 1933, later on joined the PDC in Germany.

³³² Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 213.

³³³ *Ibidem*, p. 213.

of the discussion, traditional Catholic societies such as the Catholic Evidence Guild could no longer capture their audience, neither could anti-communist papal encyclicals. The Church desperately needed a new approach to public relations.³³⁴ The anti-socialist propaganda of the PDC, which started a year later in 1937, was to fulfil that need with what one of its collaborators, Fr James Ellison, called a 'modern' approach, 'as sensational [...] as possible [that] hit [the reader] hard on the head, preferably with a bit of his own bread and butter'.³³⁵

Fr Ellison, a young priest in St Matthew Liverpool, not only created pamphlets for the Commission but also trained lecturers on the topic of Spain and advised Msgr Adamson on the possible communist backgrounds of 'suspect' Catholics.³³⁶ He was also a fervent believer in a Judeo-masonic conspiracy. In a letter to Msgr Adamson Ellison disclosed the extent of an alleged Jewish conspiracy against Catholicism and Western civilisation without which the phenomenon communism could not be understood properly:

The modern socialist movement is in great part the work of the Jews: It was the Jews who imprinted on it the mark of their brain: it was equally the Jews who had a preponderant part in the government of the first socialist republics. Present day world-socialism forms the first stage in the accomplishment of the Mosaic teaching, the beginning of the future state of the world [...] But in doing this, we must bear in mind this historic fact: that as a general rule, where Freemasonry is active, the Jew does not appear, for he does not care much to work openly.³³⁷

Ellison was promptly invited by Msgr Adamson to write a pamphlet on the Jewish-masonic conspiracy. He was advised not to 'bawl it from the Church-tops', but attack it indirectly 'without naming it'.³³⁸ According to Kester Aspden, the pamphlet was eventually not published, as the archdiocesan censor Joseph Cartmell was worried about 'involving the Archbishop and through him the Church officially in

³³⁴ Meeting notes, 10.9.1936. Other participants were Rev G. Rimmer; a student from Upholland; Mr Whitehead; J. Campbell; W. Waldron (General Secretary CYMS); J. Kelly (retired Detective Sergeant); Cyril Clancy. AAL, Downey Collection Series 1, VI Godless Congress.

³³⁵ Fr Ellison to Msgr Adamson, 4.1.1938. Cited in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 212.

³³⁶ On his role with PDC see Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 212. For his advice on alleged communist allegiances see his letter to Mgr Adamson 20.3.1938. AAL, Downey Collection Series 1, VI.

³³⁷ As he mentioned himself, Ellison was influenced by the writings of Fr Cahill, Fr Fahey, Msgr Jouin, Nesta Webster. He assured Adamson that neither of these personalities had 'bees in their bonnets', characterising himself as 'the least rabid & mildest man' not suffering from 'phobias and such like'. 'To My Mind' by Fr Ellison, enclosed in letter to Msgr Adamson, 4.3.1938. AAL, Downey Collection Series 1, VI.

³³⁸ For Adamson's invitation see Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 213. For the quotes see Ellison's letter to Mgr Adamson, 10.3.1938. AAL, Downey Collection Series 1, VI.

what Catholic working men might regard as pro-Fascism'. He instead advised Mgr Adamson and Fr Sheppard of the PDC to confine their more explicitly 'political' material to the pages of the Catholic press, which they subsequently did.³³⁹

Much like those of German Catholicism, Catholic publications in England were largely focused on an effective defence against socialism, rather than any concern with domestic fascism. Apart from the *Catholic Worker*, the media remained silent on this issue, but was willing to exploit sources, however unreliable, to promote its anti-communism. The PDC, for instance, relied at times on rather dubious sources for its information, including the Information Distributing Bureau in London.³⁴⁰ In its efforts to fight communism, the Bureau also peddled pro-Hitler literature such as John Baker White's *Dover-Nuremberg Return*.³⁴¹ The manager of the Bureau, a Lady Makins, had Cardinal Hinsley's approval for her anti-communist campaign, but was told not to run the Bureau as 'Catholic'. Hinsley was apparently not aware of the Bureau's full range of political activity. Upon hearing about the Bureau's crude and 'misleading' anti-communist leaflets, he asked Fr O'Hea of the CSG to rein in Lady Makins' political activities 'for which she has no countenance' from him.³⁴² Catholics in Liverpool were likewise encouraged to rely on a right-wing publisher, the Right Book Club, and not on the 'dangerous' publications of the Left Book Club.³⁴³ The Right Book Club was a publishing house under the patronage of TPH Beamish with clear pro-fascist if not pro-Hitler and antisemitic tendencies. The Club advertised books on Spain, Germany, communism and the decline of Britain.

The imbalance between accounts of communism and fascism was not confined to fringe organisations. It could also be found in the larger and well-known publishing houses of English Catholicism, among them Sheed & Ward and The Catholic Truth Society. Sheed & Ward was the private enterprise of Frank Sheed and his wife

³³⁹ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 214.

³⁴⁰ Request for information in AAL, Downey Papers, Godless Congress 32 / 1.

³⁴¹ Leaflet Information Distribution Bureau. CSG, J15 Economic League. For John Baker White see Griffiths: *Fellow Travellers*, pp. 268-70.

³⁴² Letters O'Hea to Private Secretary of Cardinal Hinsley, 20.7.1937; Private Secretary to O'Hea, 21.7.1937. CSG, E9 Cardinal Hinsley 1929-41.

³⁴³ It was Thomas Burns who had approached Fr O'Hea of the CSG regarding the Right Book Club, who then unwittingly recommended it to Bishop Williams of Birmingham. Letter O'Hea to Williams, 24.12.1937. BAA, AP/S8/1. On the Left Book Club see John Lewis: *The Left Book Club. A Historical Record*, London, 1970.

Maisie Ward, operating largely independent of the hierarchy.³⁴⁴ Both also organised the Catholic Evidence Guild, a society to propagate the Catholic faith.³⁴⁵ Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward were firm supporters of Mussolini and Franco and even suggested the Catholic Evidence Guild should align itself with fascism.³⁴⁶ Sheed & Ward introduced the work of the conservative German Catholics Karl Adam and Carl Schmitt to their readership.³⁴⁷ *Fascism and Providence* by JK Heydon was also published by Frank Sheed in 1937. Heydon insisted therein that fascism 'is of Catholic origin and no English Catholic has a right to condemn the Nazis. Catholics who do may be found to be fighting against God'.³⁴⁸ Thomas Burns joined Sheed & Ward and the CEG and became an important Catholic publisher, editing many Catholic fellow travellers of the right, including G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Roy Campbell, Arnold Lunn, and Christopher Hollis. Yet Sheed & Ward also introduced the French neo-Thomist Jacques Maritain to their readers. Maritain was later acclaimed for his criticism of fascism and National Socialism.³⁴⁹

The Catholic Truth Society (CTS), the Catholic publisher that probably came closest to the notion of an ecclesiastical publishing house, had increased the numbers of its anti-socialist pamphlets in the 1930s.³⁵⁰ In their annual report for the year 1937 the CTS noted with satisfaction the great demand for pamphlets on communism, but pamphlets on the dangers of fascism did not feature.³⁵¹ In 1938, the Executive

³⁴⁴ Dennis Sewell accredited Sheed & Ward with successfully broadening and deepening the English Catholic literary revival. Sewell: *Catholics*, p. 71.

³⁴⁵ At times the Catholic Evidence Guild (that was also training the Catholic Guild of Israel's public speakers) warned of the dangers of socialism linking the Jews and communists. CEG leaflet against communism in: AAW, Hi 2, 1930-40. The Guild's propaganda work against communism was under the auspices of the Bishop of Leeds.

³⁴⁶ Hastings: 'English Catholicism', p. 76.

³⁴⁷ For information on the Catholic theologian Karl Adam see Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, pp. 178-80. Adam supported Hitler's government and its antisemitic policies in his writings. He saw the Jews as racially alien to the Aryan race and opposed any *Blutvermischung*. In his eyes, National Socialist antisemitism did not just target Jews but Bolshevism and was thus a 'dutiful act of Christian Germanic self-defence' (Ibidem, p. 180). Carl Schmitt's active support for National Socialism and Hitler are well known, for his antisemitism see Gross: *Carl Schmitt und die Juden*, Frankfurt, 2000.

³⁴⁸ Morris: 'Catholic Writers II', p. 89.

³⁴⁹ Sewell: *Catholics*, p. 71. On the Sheeds see Wilfrid Sheed: *Frank and Maisie. A Memoir with Parents*, London, 1986.

³⁵⁰ Herbert Vaughan, the later Cardinal, felt the need for a society that spread the knowledge of the Catholic faith and helped 'non-Catholics back to the Faith'. The Catholic Truth Society was eventually founded by a group of priests and laymen in London 1884. Herbert Vaughan became its first president, and all his successors to the See of Westminster accepted the CTS presidency. SDA, 181 / 50, Catholic Truth Society.

³⁵¹ The demand was credited to the Spanish conflict. 'CTS Annual Report 1937', p. 85. Aspdén claims 200,000 printed pamphlet for September 1937. Aspdén: *Fortress Church*, p. 211.

Committee of the CTS agreed that they would not publish pamphlets hostile to fascism as this would be viewed as an attack on the BUF and as such as a political statement.³⁵² If interested in fascism or National Socialism it was possible to borrow Hitler's *Mein Kampf* from the CTS Liverpool library, which was among the most frequently borrowed books in spring 1939³⁵³, while *Communism and Socialism* by Arnold Lunn was recommended 'for all those who overemphasise the dangers of nazism to socialism'.³⁵⁴

Recommended reading on socialism often left no doubt about its alleged Jewish roots. The review of Robert Sencourt's *Spain's Ordeal* reminded the reader that

unless Bolshevism is nipped in the bud immediately it is bound to spread, in one form or another, over Europe and the whole world, as it is organised and run by Jews, who have no nationality and whose aim and object is to destroy for their own ends the existing order of things. [...] The book is in the very first rank and should be read by all.³⁵⁵

A classic of the CTS, *The Church and Socialism* by Hilaire Belloc, was kept permanently in print and by 1933 it was one of the most popular books in the library of the Catholic Guild of Israel in east London.³⁵⁶ The edition of 1931 blamed 'certain Jewish conspirators' for the Russian Revolution in 1917 and 'the same alien clique' for Soviet terror and the spread of communism in the west.³⁵⁷

To some extent, the attitude of the CTS towards socialism reflected Vatican policy at the time, though there still remained some room for argument as the Catholic conflicts over the Spanish Civil War indicated.³⁵⁸ However, at the very beginning of the year 1939 Cardinal Hinsley had condemned both communism and fascism / National Socialism. Why then did the CTS choose to sympathise with the extreme right? The strongest indicator of the pro-fascist inclination of the CTS lies in the person of the organising secretary, TWC Curd. Curd had already professed his belief

³⁵² Cited in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 216.

³⁵³ The other two most popular books were Foss; Gerahty: *Spanish Arena*; Msgr Knox: *Let Dons Delight*. *Catholic Truth*, 1939 (May-June), p. 71.

³⁵⁴ 'Catholic Book Notes', *Catholic Truth*, 1939 (Nov-Dec), p. 191.

³⁵⁵ 'Catholic Book Notes', *Catholic Truth*, 1937 (Sept-Oct), p. 172.

³⁵⁶ *CGI Newsletter*, Spring 1933, p. 16.

³⁵⁷ Hilaire Belloc: *The Church and Socialism*, CTS Pamphlet, London, 1931, pp.15-16. The essay was already written in 1909 and amended with an assessment of the Russian Revolution later on.

³⁵⁸ For the Vatican's emphasis on anti-socialism rather than fascism, see Kertzer: *Unholy War*, pp. 14-15. Also Aspden who points to the strikingly stronger emphasis on the anti-socialist encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* (published only days after *Mit Brennender Sorge*) to that on the anti-fascist encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 215-16.

in a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy in Catholic newspapers. In April 1933, for instance, he composed a letter to the editor of the *Catholic Times* in response to a discussion on the persecution of the Jews in Germany. Curd insisted that 'to say that there is no Jewish international force [...] in face of the Jewish international financial ring simply will not do.' He continued to explain that this dominance was the reason why Hitler wanted to get rid of the Jews, and that the Jews ultimately had to blame themselves for their persecution.³⁵⁹

Although there is little surviving evidence of open antisemitism in the CTS archive, the activities and the literature published and recommended endorsed the conspiratorial and at times antisemitic worldview of right-wing Distributists and other right-leaning authors. This essentially belies the political neutrality that the CTS brought up as an explanation for not printing anti-fascist pamphlets. Besides the institutionalised refusal to criticise fascism, it is also noteworthy that Hilaire Belloc was a constant feature in the booklist of the CTS as a regular commentator in their journals. Curd's fellow Distributists, Douglas Jerrold, Arnold Lunn, and the BUF member Benvenisti all received a good press from the CTS.³⁶⁰

3.2.5 *Incidents of Co-operation with the Right*

3.2.5.1 *The Hierarchy and Spain. Archbishop Amigo*

The bishops of England and Wales were quick to condemn the 'attack on the Church of Spain' when the Civil War broke out and sent a message of sympathy to the Spanish hierarchy in October 1936.³⁶¹ A joint pastoral letter was published in December 1936 that warned of the 'Anti-God forces [...] sapping and mining the foundations of society' and urged Catholics to unite 'in one solid compact line against the battalions of evil'.³⁶² Given that the Holy See had encouraged all Catholic hierarchies to see the Spanish Civil War 'as a struggle to the death between

³⁵⁹ 'The Persecution of the Jews', *Catholic Times*, 28.4.1933, p. 6.

³⁶⁰ 'Catholic Book Notes', *Catholic Truth*, 1938 (Jan-Feb), p. 34. 'Catholic Book Notes', *Catholic Truth*, 1939 (May-June), p. 82.

³⁶¹ Minutes Bishops' meeting, 20.10.1936. AAW, Acta Bishops 1930-38, V, 24.

³⁶² Cited in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 207.

Christianity and godless communism', nobody was surprised by the English hierarchy's support for the Nationalists in Spain. Moloney suggests that Archbishop Hinsley tried to uphold the government's principle of non-intervention by giving support neither to pro-fascist nor to anti-fascist invitations.³⁶³ Yet the activities of some members of the hierarchy, including Hinsley, underlined their pro-Franco leanings, making it difficult to speak of an attempt to find a 'Christian centre' in a balancing act between socialism and fascism.

The English bishops set aside a day of prayer against the 'menace of Communism' for 9 May 1937 and organised collections at church doors for a 'Christian army in Spain [...] fighting anti-Christ'.³⁶⁴ Aid for National Spain came also in a more official form, as the Bishops' Committee for the Relief of Spanish Distress. Although it promised humanitarian and medical help for 'the destitute children of Spain' in general, their bias towards Franco's supporters was clear.³⁶⁵ In a description of its work the organisation declared that: 'Through this [medical] unit the Nationalist authorities in Spain are being given an example of English co-operation which is invaluable: Hitherto, those who are defending the Christian cause have had too many occasions to complain that the public expression of sympathy in England has been given to the Red forces. We claim that this organisation goes far to redress that unfortunate impression.'³⁶⁶

Whilst there is no doubt about the loyalty of the English Catholic hierarchy towards Franco's cause (with the exception of Bishop Brown), most bishops defended their attitude on the grounds that they were protesting against the treatment of the Catholic Church by the Spanish government and the Republican forces. Archbishop Amigo of Southwark, however, argued a different line.

³⁶³ Moloney: *Westminster*, pp. 64-65. He recalled General Eoin O'Duffy (the fascist-style leader of the Irish Blueshirts) approaching Hinsley to sanction appeals in the English Catholic press in support for his military campaign alongside Franco; and Eric Gill's suggestion the hierarchy should openly protest against the Nationalist open bombing of towns.

³⁶⁴ Letter Ernest Lashmar to Amigo, 6.9.1936. AAS, Amigo Papers, Spanish Civil War.

³⁶⁵ Tom Buchanan found that humanitarian help for the Nationalists was provided 'almost exclusively' by the Catholic Church. Tom Buchanan: *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 118-19.

³⁶⁶ Letter Miss Dorothea Borton, Bishop's Committee for the Relief of Spanish Distress, to Amigo 22.10.1936. Report on fund raising. The Committee had begun work in September 1936 and had raised £8,800 at the time of Miss Borton's letter. The report of April 1938 claimed that the Committee had managed to raise £10,800 since 1936. Most of the money went into mobile medical care, which was warmly received by members of a medical hospital as help in their 'fight against Bolshevism, the enemy of Christ and of the whole civilised world.' Letter Cecil Pereira, chairman of the executive committee, to Amigo, 25 April 1938. AAS, Amigo Papers, Spanish Civil War.

Amigo was born in Gibraltar in May 1864 and spent his childhood there until he began his studies in England at the age of fourteen. He studied at St Edmund's, Ware, and worked as priest and teacher in London parishes and schools before his consecration as Bishop of Southwark in 1904.³⁶⁷ Aspden has suggested that Amigo's familiarity with Catholic Spain made him feel the fate of the Church under the Second Republic (1931-33) more acutely, and strengthened his determined support for Nationalist Spain during the Civil War.³⁶⁸ He corresponded with those who shared his views, in expression of mutual support. The tenor of these exchanges was that Franco's victory was a 'victory won for civilisation and Christianity throughout the world'.³⁶⁹ Like most Francoists in Britain, Amigo's correspondents believed that if Spain should fall into the hands of communism, like Russia and the France of the Popular Front, Britain would be the next victim. Amigo received letters from the deputy editor of *The Morning Post*, a paper that regularly supplied its readers with Jewish-Bolshevik scare stories, Arthur Loveday, whose favourite topic was the alleged dominance of Jews in the press. Loveday also spoke at meetings of the right-wing racist Nordic League and was a member of Captain Ramsay's Right Club. Alfred Douglas was another correspondent of Amigo. Douglas was a member of various extremist groups, an antisemite, anti-communist, homophobe, best known for his book *Plain English*.³⁷⁰ There were also Captain Ramsay, Conservative MP for Peebles and president of the antisemitic, pro-Hitler Right Club, Douglas Jerrold and Arnold Lunn who tried to canvass the archbishop's support for their right-wing organisations, The United Christian Front and Friends of National Spain.³⁷¹

Amigo for his part stood by the policy of non-intervention and avoided any public support for these organisations.³⁷² Instead, he chose subtler forms of assistance. These would range from permitting his parish priests to announce forthcoming events of the Friends of National Spain to simple encouragement to them to continue

³⁶⁷ Michael Clifton: *Amigo. Friend of the Poor. The Bishop of Southwark 1904-1949*, Leominster, 1987, pp. 3-5.

³⁶⁸ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 209-10. Clifton: *Amigo*, p. 65.

³⁶⁹ Letter Alba to Amigo, 4.3.1939. Or Arthur Loveday to Amigo, 15.1.1937, who saw the Civil War as a 'struggle between the creeds of Christ and Marx'. AAS, Amigo Papers, Spanish Civil War.

³⁷⁰ Letter deputy editor to Amigo, 15.1.1937; Arthur Loveday to Amigo, 15.1.1937; letter Alfred Douglas to Amigo, 31.1.1939. AAS, Amigo Papers, Spanish Civil War. I am grateful to Kester Aspden for drawing my attention to Douglas' background.

³⁷¹ Letters A Ramsay to Amigo, 18.9.1937 and 2.10.1937. AAS, Amigo Papers, Spanish Civil War.

³⁷² After the Civil War was over and the Friends of National Spain regrouped as Friends of Spain, Hinsley agreed to be vice-president of the new Friends. The post was also offered to and accepted by Amigo. D. Jerrold to Amigo, 6.7.1939. AAS, Amigo Papers, Spanish Civil War. Clifton: *Amigo*, p. 147.

their 'valuable work'.³⁷³ When Amigo had to decline an invitation to a public meeting of the Friends of National Spain in March 1937, he assured the organisers that

if Franco had not courageously come forward, Spain would be a complete ruin by now. The enemies of religion, chiefly from Russia, have been undermining Catholic Spain for years [...] The Nationalists hope to put an end to this awful state of things, and there is peace for the Church and happiness for the people where Franco rules. We wish him a speedy and complete victory.³⁷⁴

One public meeting of the Friends of National Spain announced a meeting with Merry de Val³⁷⁵ and Hilaire Belloc on the same platform as HP Croft and Lord Phillimore, well-known fellow travellers of the right with a poignant dislike of Jews.³⁷⁶ On another occasion the Catholic community was represented by the lay president of the episcopally approved and endorsed Catholic Action, Dr WJ O'Donovan.³⁷⁷

In their fight against the 'Red Menace to Christianity' these organisations stood for the Church's own interest in defying anti-religious communism. Yet by 1939, Captain Ramsay, for example, was well known for his antisemitism and leniency towards National Socialist Germany, while his United Christian Front was unremittingly pro-Franco.³⁷⁸ Ramsay also believed that the Second Spanish Republic was part of a sinister plot by world Jewry.³⁷⁹ Arnold Lunn's involvement with the conservative right has already been mentioned. Many activists of the Friends of National Spain (like Lunn, Jerrold and Loveday) were anti-Jewish and showed a

³⁷³ Moral to Amigo, 11.2.1938. AAS, Amigo Papers, Spanish Civil War.

³⁷⁴ Letter Amigo to Eugene Egan, March 1937. Ibidem.

³⁷⁵ Merry De Val was the nationalist press officer at Burgos and the nephew of Cardinal Raffael Merry de Val, formerly Secretary of State for Pius X. Sewell: *Catholics*, p. 78.

³⁷⁶ Leaflet 'Anglo-Spanish Friendship' Friends of National Spain meeting, 29.3.1939. AAS, Amigo Papers, Spanish Civil War. On HP Croft and Lord Phillimore (who was also regularly corresponding with Belloc) see Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 79, p. 221.

³⁷⁷ Amigo to Eugene Egan, March 1937. AAS, Amigo Papers, Spanish Civil War.

³⁷⁸ Griffiths pinpoints Ramsay's first antisemitic public speech as the one printed in the Arbroath Herald, 14.1.1938. Thus, whenever Ramsay was speaking of 'communist aliens' or 'international money power' after January 1938, one can assume that he was referring to Jews, as he did in that speech. Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 82, p. 85. The United Christian Front employed the same coded language and it was not long before Archbishop Temple publicly warned to get involved with the Front (because of its pro-Franco line). Apart from the usual upper middle-class support, the Front was popular with representatives of numerous Christian churches, among them the Anglican Dean Inge of St Paul's London. Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 79.

³⁷⁹ Ibidem, p. 95, p. 97, p. 278.

remarkable tolerance towards Hitler's Germany. One of its leading figures, HW Luttmann-Johnson, was an open apologist for Hitler and Franco. He was not discernibly antisemitic, but Luttmann-Johnson was untroubled by the antisemitism of the groups in which he was also prominent: the BUF, the January Club, the Windsor Club (where Douglas Jerrold was also a member), and the Right Club.³⁸⁰ Neither apologies for Hitler nor tirades against Jews seemed to have bothered Amigo, Hinsley, Belloc and Merry de Val enough to make them disassociate themselves from these organisations.

3.2.5.2 *The Freethinker's Congress in September 1938*

The 25th Freethinker's Congress in London in September 1938 was another occasion when the Catholic hierarchy accepted the support of personalities of the far right. In the words of the Home Secretary Samuel Hoare this gathering was judged to be harmless, just 'a joint committee of four British societies which have extended an invitation to the International Federation of Freethinkers to hold its quinquennial conference in London in September next, it being 50 years since a similar conference was held in this country.'³⁸¹

However, to others the meeting was a smokescreen to hide more sinister communist activities. Captain Ramsay, for example, believed that the conference was organised by the 'League of the Militant Godless' which was based in Moscow and could thus be nothing less than a subversive communist plot to undermine democracy. Other Conservative MPs shared his concerns when he raised in the Commons the question of communist links and possible riots and disturbances accompanying such a conference.³⁸² The Distributists' *Weekly Review*, too, saw the Freethinker's Congress as part of a worldwide anti-God movement engineered by Moscow and supported Ramsay's Aliens Restriction (Blasphemy) Bill.³⁸³ This bill was designed 'to prevent the participation by aliens in assemblies for the purpose of propagating blasphemous or atheistic doctrines or in other activities calculated to interfere with the established religious institutions of Great Britain' with the real aim of prohibiting 'gatherings of

³⁸⁰ Ibidem, p. 133.

³⁸¹ Cited in ibidem, p. 80.

³⁸² Ibidem, p. 80.

³⁸³ Corrin: *Chesterton and Belloc*, p. 196.

Free Thinkers, Secularists, Rationalists, and Ethical Societies, which have a Communist origin, being attended by Communist aliens from other countries'.³⁸⁴ At this point Ramsay was already well immersed in a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory, interpreting the Russian and Spanish revolutions as Jewish plots. To his friends and supporters of the far-right (Admiral Barry Domvile, and Nesta Webster) there was also no doubt that the real targets of the bill were foreign Jews.³⁸⁵ The bill was eventually passed on 28 June 1938 in its first reading by 165 to 134 votes.³⁸⁶

The vocal part of English Catholicism was also in no doubt that freethinkers were dangerous not only because they held deist or atheist views but because of communist influence – which was seen as being purely 'anti-God'.³⁸⁷ Since the Russian Revolution the terms 'anti-God' and 'Godless' were regular attributes used by bishops and Catholic publications and organisations to refer to communism.³⁸⁸

In February 1938, Cardinal Hinsley had been deeply alarmed by the prospect of an 'anti-God' congress in London later that year. He enquired in Rome whether the link between the Freethinkers and Moscow was true. He subsequently received a response by a Fr Ledit who wrote that he could prove that these contacts existed. Hinsley then gathered together his advisers and four editors of Catholic newspapers to deliberate on the problem. The conclusions from their discussions were firstly that the Freethinker Congress should not receive unnecessary publicity through extensive debates in Catholic newspapers on its worthiness. Secondly, it was not expected that government help was forthcoming. Advised by Mr Grant-Ferris, a Catholic Conservative MP,³⁸⁹ they concluded that the only option to 'clip the wings of the Anti-Gods' would be 'to put into stern force the Aliens' Act and stringent control of passports.'³⁹⁰ Meanwhile, the committee suggested a letter of protest, signed by many sections of British society. And lastly, the Knights of St Columba and other

³⁸⁴ Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted*, pp. 80-81.

³⁸⁵ Ibidem, pp. 82-85.

³⁸⁶ Ibidem, pp. 80-81.

³⁸⁷ 'The Godless Congress', by PDC Liverpool (without date). AAL, Downey Collection Series 1, VI.

³⁸⁸ As mentioned in various pastorals, e.g., Salford Lent Pastoral 1932, see most newspaper articles on communism, Russia, etc. Rev George J. MacGillivray's book *Anti-God Front of Bolshevism* (London, 1930) was in high demand by visitors to the CGI Library in London's East End. *CGI Newsletter*, Spring 1933, p. 4. Apart from the CGI, it was the PDC, the Knights of St Columba, the Society of St Vincent Paul and the League of Mary that warned against 'anti-God' movements. BAA, AP / S16 Society of St Vincent de Paul SVP 1927-81.

³⁸⁹ Sir Robert Grant Ferris, later Lord Harvington, pro-Franco and chamberlain to Pius XII and John XXIII. Sewell: *Catholics*, p. 195.

³⁹⁰ Reported in Hinsley's letter to Downey, 26.2.1938. AAL, Downey Collection Series 1, VI.

Catholic organisations should 'keep watch and ward and privately work against the Congress'.³⁹¹

In May 1938 TWC Curd, organising secretary of the publishing house CTS and manager of the Marydown land association, attended a meeting of the Christian Defence Movement in the House of Commons together with most conservative Catholic MPs and some representatives of Catholic societies. The purpose was twofold: to find a common action against the Freethinker's Congress and co-ordinate the activities of all anti-communist organisations in Britain. The result of their deliberations was an appeal to the Home Secretary to ban the congress on the basis that such a gathering would most likely lead to a breach of the peace. Curd admonished all Catholic societies concerned to give this resolution special consideration, since it was 'closely in accord with the wishes of the Hierarchy'.³⁹² Unlike in Germany, where Joseph Wirth had pushed through a presidential decree for the protection of religious organisations in September 1931, little was achieved by Catholic protests either in the Commons or outside. The British government did not move to ban the Freethinker's Congress.

The Christian Defence Movement was host to figures of the extreme right and prone to antisemitism. Its president was the Earl of Glasgow who had belonged to various right-wing groups, among others the British Fascisti in the 1920s and the BUF in the 1930s. The Movement was also closely linked to Ramsay's United Christian Front.³⁹³ It is not surprising that Curd would feel comfortable in such company given his Judeo-Bolshevik obsession. For the hierarchy and Catholic MPs it remains to be said that antisemitism and extremist links did not compromise their hostility to the Congress.

The Catholic media as usual took a less subtle stance, as the report on the protest march in the *Catholic Times* exemplifies. London dioceses had organised a vast

³⁹¹ Ibidem.

³⁹² On the Christian Defence Movement meeting see confidential report 'The Proposed Anti-God Congress' by TWC Curd, 5.5.1938. The Archdiocese Liverpool eventually sent out a circular letter to the Deanery Ecclesiastical Assistants asking them to send a protest letter to the Home Secretary signed by religious, civic and public bodies. Any unnecessary publicity should be avoided, as should any obvious connection to the Catholic hierarchy (the letter should be sent in by the local mayor). Circular letter signed by Adamson, Downey's secretary, 26.5.1938. AAL, Downey Collection Series 1, VI.

³⁹³ Griffiths: *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 60.

procession from Southwark to Westminster Cathedral 'For Peace and Faith', but above all in protest against the Freethinker's Congress. According to the *Catholic Times* 45,000 people attended the march and Archbishop Amigo was in their midst. The next day pictures from the procession adorned the front page of the *Catholic Times* with the following heading: 'They Marched 'For Peace and Faith'. For Two Hours They Passed: And With Them Walked The Blind And Lamé'. The following text then made clear what it was all about: 'The Godless in London must have smiled sardonically when they opened their eyes and gazed out of their windows on Sunday morning before turning over for another "forty winks". Memoirs of their Jewish chairman's words [referring to Mr Chapman Cohen] at their recent congress must have floated momentarily into mind [...] And it was the day of the silent march through London of the Catholic men in atonement for their [Freethinker's] Congress.'³⁹⁴

3.3 Summary and Comparison

The Distributists around *G.K.'s Weekly* shared with the *Rechtskatholiken* a fascination for fascism, particularly Mussolini's and Franco's, and a deep contempt for liberalism and parliamentary democracy. Of the two organisations the Distributists are the more unlikely fellow travellers of the right. Unlike the *Rechtskatholiken* they did not start their journey as monarchists and staunch opponents of parliamentary democracy. The leading Distributists began their political career within English Liberalism and their organisation retained many liberal objectives in its programme. Via a detour of failed political activity and disillusionment with parliamentary democracy, they nevertheless arrived at a similar

³⁹⁴ *Catholic Times*, 23.9.1938, p. 2.

fascination with fascism. The worldview of both groups radicalised at a point when they felt that Christian civilisation was under immediate threat from 'atheistic communism'. It was not just that their interpretation of a 'Jewish question' grew increasingly more fantastic, they also began to seek closer co-operation with the extreme right. *G.K.'s Weekly* reached this point in the late 1930s, triggered by the Spanish Civil War. Many *Rechtskatholiken* had made their peace with the extreme right a few years earlier. By 1931, Hitler held the promise of the long hoped for 'national government' that would suppress the extreme left (and SPD) and restore order on Germany's streets, which had descended into street battles between communists and Nazi militants.

There was a considerable congruity in the worldview of both groups: both cherished the corporatist organisation of past societies and idealised the rural community as the source of true Englishness or Germandom. Nationalism, anti-socialism and antisemitism made up the kernel of their ideology and the main motives for their activities. In both cases, nationalism had as objective the protection of the national identity, particularly against communism and with that against Jewish influence. With respect to its antisemitism and the search for a spiritual rejuvenation of the English people through the Christian faith, Distributist nationalism was not dissimilar to the *völkisch* nationalism of the *Rechtskatholiken*. It was, however, strangely introspective in the way it rejected Britain's imperialism and celebrated instead 'true Englishness' in the figure of the 'pure peasant' untouched by industry and sprawling cities. Indeed, the nation for many of these Catholics was English rather than British. Britain, the Empire and international grandeur, were effectively seen as one of the main factors that had corrupted 'Englishness'. The *Rechtskatholiken's* nationalism was not so localised. It was defying the nation's defeat in the last war and was planning for a glamorous new role for Germany in Central Europe. The national fervour of both groups coincided again in their conviction that the nation's demise was partly caused by undue Jewish influence on national affairs.

Apart from their anxiety about an alleged omnipresent Jewish influence, the Distributists shared more anti-Jewish phobias with the *Rechtskatholiken*. At the centre was in both cases the image of the 'Jewish Bolshevik'. Anti-socialism and

antisemitism became the most persuasive argument of the Catholic right for supporting right-wing extremism.

In contrast to the *Rechtskatholiken*, the circle around *G.K.'s Weekly* fused the 'Jewish Bolshevik' stereotype with that of the 'Jewish financier', feeding on anti-establishment and anti-capitalist sentiments of their circle. They also used religious anti-Jewish prejudices more frequently. In both groups, antisemitism had a markedly defensive character, defending both the nation as well as Christian/Catholic interest.

The social background of right-wing Catholic activists in England and Germany was markedly different. The inner circle of the *Rechtskatholiken* was largely made up of Catholic aristocrats, upper middle-class Catholics and academics, while the leadership of Distributism came from a less prestigious social class. They had either an educated middle-class background and were journalists and writers, or were middle-class professionals or self-employed businessmen. There was a strikingly high number of converts to Catholicism among the Distributists, including most famously G.K. Chesterton himself, but Arnold Lunn, Douglas Jerrold, and Gregory Macdonald had found their 'path to Rome' too. Adrian Hastings has pointed out that English Catholicism lacked an intellectual tradition before the arrival of the Chesterbelloc circle in the 1920s/30s. There had always been remarkable individuals such as Cardinal Newman, William Tyrell, Fr Martin d'Arcy, or the neo-gothic architect Augustus Welby Pugin, but they left only a faint imprint on wider British cultural life. The wave of conversions to Catholicism in the 1920s brought a large number of highly educated Protestants into the community. In a way, these converts became the intellectual 'aristocrats' of English Catholicism, lending Distributism status through the esteem and recognition they still enjoyed in non-Catholic England.

The organisations of the *Rechtskatholiken* and Distributism worked with similar methods for the same aim: Christian national re-education. But the response to such a vague objective came from different sectors in society. The promise of a reformed society attracted middle-class professionals and intellectuals to Distributism, while the Catholic land movement was popular with the clergy and Catholic workers. In Germany, the affiliated institutions of *Rechtskatholiken* were largely frequented by leaders of peasant, youth and student organisations.

If we ask who had the broader and more immediate effect on Catholic public discourse, the answer is the Distributists. Even though the link between the *Rechtskatholiken* and the DNVP and its infrastructure enabled them to build a broader network of organisations with a more direct political influence than did G.K. Chesterton, (who relied solely on his journal and the land movements), the Distributists had a wide influence on Catholic public discourse from 1935, and especially during the Spanish Civil War. Together with numerous ecclesiastical anti-socialist publications, they aimed to draw public attention to the threat from the left, while fascism was portrayed as a legitimate 'Catholic' form of government. Antisemitism was not just tolerated in this discourse, but was often present in the form of the 'Jewish-Bolshevik' stereotype. With the positive resonance of Distributist thought amongst Catholic intellectuals and writers, Chesterton had in a way set the seeds for his aim to re-educate the British public. There is no doubt that not every Catholic in England supported the views of *G.K.'s Weekly*. Indeed, Catholic activists in the peace and labour movement challenged the pro-fascist outlook of the Catholic media and the bishops. However, they were not well enough organised to become a serious counterweight to the Catholic right. They certainly could not utilise an established and tightly woven party organisation in the way the Centre Party could.

The *Rechtskatholiken* did not achieve such a broad resonance in the public discourse of Weimar Germany. Their success lay rather in their lobby work, which opened the doors to institutions of political Catholicism. The invitation of the *Zentralkomitee* lent the DNVP Catholics the acknowledgement they had fought for. Moreover, this together with the Centre's move towards the right from 1928 strengthened the conservative wing of political Catholicism and weakened the Centre's democratic left. The *Rechtskatholiken* saw their aim for a nationalist government eventually fulfilled in the presidential governments of von Papen, von Schleicher and Hitler.

This chapter has suggested several explanations for the relative success of Distributism. The most obvious lay in their positions as famous intellectuals, newspaper editors, or lay organisation leaders and their ambition to seek public support. The *Rechtskatholiken* on the other hand preferred to remain an exclusive club married to the politics of notables. Secondly, the Distributists had the additional advantage that they encountered far less opposition than the *Rechtskatholiken*. The

retreat of the hierarchy from social issues was not simply a case of 'political neutrality', as regularly claimed by Cardinal Hinsley. The Distributist approach to the social question, with its decided anti-socialism, was close to the heart of the hierarchy's worldview. *G.K.'s Weekly* and the land movement consequently received considerable clerical support. Furthermore, the bishops rejected political neutrality when they threw their weight behind a pro-Franco campaign during the Spanish Civil War, while at the same time silencing Franco critics. Compared with the Distributists, the *Rechtskatholiken* experienced far stiffer opposition from the bishops, many lay organisations and above all the Centre Party. The process of what Hürten terms '*Verkirchlichung*' of German Catholicism, a philosophy that placed the religious community as an all encompassing reality above the individual³⁹⁵, was considerably slower, because of the extensive network of lay organisations that remained committed to political activity. The bishops' care in not endorsing the *Rechtskatholiken* together with the Centre's defence against the Catholic right left no immediate void that could be filled by the *Rechtskatholiken*. Although the Centre Party (and more so the BVP) contributed to the rise of antisemitism after the First World War and never really refrained from its use throughout Weimar, *Rechtskatholiken* eventually only made their way into political Catholicism through the backdoor of the conservative leadership of the *Zentralkomitee*. Even though the structure of political Catholicism was willing and strong enough to confront political right-wing competitors, it engaged with the ideology of the right-wing – especially its antisemitism – only half-heartedly.

The support of vocal Catholics in England for Franco and Mussolini has not gone unnoticed by historians who have offered various explanations for these sympathies. Adrian Hastings has ascribed this propensity towards fascism down to Catholic anti-socialism, plus a 'natural sympathy for Catholic southern Europeans', and 'decades of Bellocian indoctrination'.³⁹⁶ Contemporaries likewise tended to attribute Catholic sympathies for fascism to a Catholic mentality. George Heseltine, a long-term activist and publicist for the Distributist League, judged that Catholics at *G.K.'s Weekly* were eager to turn it into a Catholic paper and push the League towards a

³⁹⁵ On the following references to *Verkirchlichung* see Hürten: *Kurze Geschichte*, p. 188.

³⁹⁶ Moloney on the other hand stresses that Cardinal Hinsley's attitude towards fascism was not driven by 'reactionary ultramontanist' but by a desire to maintain a 'Christian centre'. Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 62. Also Aspdon: *Fortress Church*, p. 9.

pro-fascist line in the mid-1930s.³⁹⁷ The contemporary scholar E Watkin saw in Catholic attraction to fascism a revolt against reason, 'because Catholics [in their marginal position in English society] have been frightened away from reason by the enmity of Rationalists'. Fascism on the other hand seemed to defend Catholic interests.³⁹⁸ Catholic support (especially among Distributists) for Franco during the Spanish Civil War showed every sign of such a Catholic defensive reaction, especially since the Protestant majority seemed to care neither for Catholic interests in revolutionary Mexico or Soviet Russia, nor for the anti-clericalism of the Spanish Republicans. Flint's analysis of Catholic public opinion on the Spanish Civil War is more differentiated, as he also found voices that criticised the common support for Franco. Flint saw in this rift within the English Catholic community a manifestation of two schools of thought. The apologists for fascism were mainly devoted to preserving freedom of religion and the Church, whereas Catholics critical of fascism were concerned about social justice and democratic rights.³⁹⁹

To explain Catholic support of fascism with a certain Catholic mentality appears to be most appropriate in the case of the leadership of the Distributist League. It is, however, necessary to differentiate between Distributism as an organisation and the motivation of the individuals who supported it. Unlike the back-to-the-land movement, Distributism was not an exclusively Catholic movement. Among the leaders of the League were high Anglicans, Scottish Presbyterians or agnostics, and only two of the numerous secretaries of the Central Branch in London were Catholic. The League as such was meant to transcend denominational borders to pool the strength of likeminded individuals in the search for a new social order. The authors of *G.K.'s Weekly* did not stand alone with their critique of liberal democracy and cultural pessimism nor was it specifically Catholic.⁴⁰⁰ When Chesterton set up the journal he consciously kept it free from any denominational commitments. The

³⁹⁷ Lecture on Distributism by GC Heseltine at the Chesterton Centenary Conference 1974. Heseltine's comment needs to be modified, though, as it was made in hindsight and glazes over his own commitment to Distributism. Cf. *Essays by George C Heseltine*; and *The Chesterton Society* from Rex Mawby.

³⁹⁸ Morris: 'Catholic Writers I', pp. 38-41, p. 90.

³⁹⁹ Flint: 'Must God go Fascist?', p. 374.

⁴⁰⁰ The search for an alternative to liberal democracy was quite a staple theme for Anglicans and non-religious writers as well. Grimley: 'Dawson', p. 4, pp. 16-17.

values proposed by the *Weekly*, as Chesterton wrote to a friend in 1924, were supposed to speak for themselves:

I do not mean it should be stamped with Catholicism, or only because it is commonsense; so that many would have accepted the commonsense before they even knew it was Catholicism. But there is nobody to say a single word for the family, or the true case for property, or the proper understanding of the religious peasantries, while the whole Press is full of every sort of sophistry to smooth the way for divorce, of birth-control, of mere state expedience and all the rest.⁴⁰¹

On an individual level, however, the connection between Catholicism and fascism is clearer. The editors of *G.K.'s Weekly*, Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, Gregory and Edward Macdonald decided on the paper's direction, and all of them (apart from Belloc) were converts to Catholicism whose Catholic faith was the centre of their lives.⁴⁰² This was particularly the case in G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc's philosophy of life. On the occasion of Chesterton's conversion in 1922, Belloc wrote to his old friend:

The Catholic Church is the exponent of Reality. It is true. Its doctrines in matters large and small are statements of what is. [...] My conclusion – and that of all men who have ever once seen it – is the Faith: Corporate, organised, a personality, teaching. A thing, not a theory. [...] The Catholic Church is the natural home of the human spirit. The odd perspective picture of life which looks like a meaningless puzzle at first, seen from that one standpoint takes a complete order and meaning, like the skull in the pictures of the Ambassadors.⁴⁰³

Catholicism had become the guiding principle in these men's lives because it was able to give order and meaning to an increasingly secular and diverse world. 'Latin' fascism appeared to be the means to solve pressing social problems while still safeguarding Christian values. Catholicism was therefore not so much the motivation behind their flirtation with fascism, but a refuge, offering one part of their solution to society's problems.

Apart from a philosophical explanation there is also a structural explanation why English Catholic literati were particularly susceptible to fascism. This may not lie in their tendency to think and question, as Kevin Morris has suggested, but in the

⁴⁰¹ G.K. Chesterton to Maurice Baring, 2.7.1924. CI, Letters from the British Library.

⁴⁰² Articles with contradicting opinions were sometimes simply excluded as in the case of Archie Curry. As recorded by Heseltine in his lecture at the Chesterton Centenary Conference 1974. Also Gregory Macdonald's own recollection in his letter to Michael Sewell, 22.8.1986. All in: CI, Essays by Georg C Heseltine; and Letters from Gregory Macdonald to Fr Brocard Sewell, 1986-87.

⁴⁰³ Letter Belloc to G.K. Chesterton, 1.8.1922. CI, Letters from the British Library.

information channels available and supported by Catholic organisations, which did not challenge their pro-fascist views. Finally, the institutional Church helped to confirm Catholics in their pro-fascist attitude by what it did and did not say.

Catholicism was not as central to the lives of German *Rechtskatholiken* as it was to the leading Distributists. Still, all of them were devout Catholics, attending mass and participating in Catholic lay organisations. Like Belloc and Chesterton, the foundation of their worldview was the Christian nation. In their co-operation with the DNVP (whose Protestant members were not exactly known for their tolerance towards Catholics), the *Rechtskatholiken* – like the Distributists – stressed the necessity to overcome the denominational divide amongst Christians in order to unite and rejuvenate the nation. They did not uncompromisingly adhere to the primacy of the nation. The nation and Christian values (not necessarily the Church's interests) had to go together. Once it became clear that this was not the intention of the National Socialist regime, many *Rechtskatholiken* distanced themselves from the dictatorship, and some eventually joined the conservative resistance.⁴⁰⁴

Negative images of Jews remained an unfailing part of the public discourse in both Catholic communities. Until the mid-1920s, political Catholicism in Germany had nourished antisemitic stereotypes that (apart from the racism) resembled the *völkisch* rhetoric of the radical right. Even as the Centre Party and the *Volksverein* began to publicly condemn *völkisch* antisemitism in the face of an increasingly popular NSDAP, their publications at times still upheld the claim of an undue Jewish dominance in German society, and the stereotype of the 'Jewish Bolshevik' retained a widespread currency. In England, antisemitism was most widespread and frequent in the late 1930s, when a focus on the advance of socialism during the Spanish Civil War blinded many to the persecution of the Jews in Germany. The tradition of modern antisemitism within German and English Catholicism and the inconsistent attempts to condemn Jew-hatred weakened the sensitivities of some Catholics to the antisemitism of the radical right. Such Jew-hatred was violent and racist but it

⁴⁰⁴ According to Hermann von Lüninck, ten members of the German Catholic aristocracy lost their lives as a consequence of their involvement in the attempt on Hitler's life in 1944. Among them was his brother Ferdinand who had served Hitler's government as provincial president of Westphalia until the beginning of 1938. Hermann von Lüninck resigned as the provincial president of the Rhineland at the end of 1934. Jones: 'Catholic Conservatives', p. 84; Gründer: 'Rechtskatholiken', p. 153.

nevertheless shared Catholic prejudices against 'Jewish' Bolshevism and finance. Moreover, the continuity of such sentiments affected Catholic sensitivity to the persecution of the Jews under National Socialism.⁴⁰⁵ The final chapter looks at this issue when it discusses Catholic responses in Germany and England to the persecution. It is at the same time a discussion of the continuation of religious anti-Jewish stereotypes in the age of racial persecution.

⁴⁰⁵ On popular reactions see, e.g., Otto Dov Kulka: 'Popular Christian Attitudes in the Third Reich to National Socialist Policies towards the Jews', in: *Judaism and Christianity*, pp. 251-67. Donald Dietrich: 'Antisemitism and the Institutional Catholic Church', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 16 (2002), 415-26, p. 425

4 Reactions to the Persecution of Jews

Since Hochhut's play *The Deputy* in 1963, the silence of the Catholic Church on the persecution of the Jews has been widely known, and has usually been explained in terms of traditional Catholic antisemitism, though recent works have highlighted more small-scale and discreet Catholic criticism of the persecution of the Jews and assistance given to persecuted Jews.¹ This chapter compares reactions to the persecution of the Jews in England and Germany. England is useful for this purpose because the Church functioned in a democratic state – its leaders did not have to face repression, occupation or official anti-clericalism. The comparative study here will emphasise the individual situation of national churches rather than presenting them as local branches of an anti-Jewish centre in Rome.

In the case of Catholic England this chapter largely relies on the statements and activities of the bishops in response to the antisemitic measures in Germany. The Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany and Austria (CCRGA) receives special attention as an example of Catholic aid to 'non-Aryan' Catholic refugees and of the public response it generated. The German side of the comparison likewise concentrates on the activities of the hierarchy, particularly the bishops' responses to the persecution of the Jews and ecclesiastical attempts to aid persecuted 'non-Aryans'. The latter has been portrayed as aid only granted to Christians.² A further key source is the defence against Alfred Rosenberg's anti-clerical campaign in the mid-1930s. Although this was a defence of Catholicism, it also provoked recurring comments on the relationship between Catholicism and Judaism. In Catholic historiography, this defence against Rosenberg is usually presented as an example of

¹ John Cornwell: *Hitler's Pope*, Harmondsworth, 1999. Daniel J Goldhagen: *A Moral Reckoning*, New York, 2002. For a very positive account of Pius XII see Anthony Rhodes: *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators, 1922-1945*, New York, 1973. For a more balanced account see Michael Phayer: *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965*, Bloomington, 2000.

² Beth Griech-Polelle: *Bishop von Galen. German Catholicism and National Socialism*, New Haven, 2002, pp. 52-53. Griech-Pollele: *Bishop von Galen*, p. 5. Cornwell: *Hitler's Pope*, pp. 121-23. Kertzer: *Unholy War*, pp. 264-93. For a more balanced account see Wolfgang Benz: 'Judenchristen. Zur doppelten Ausgrenzung einer Minderheit im NS Staat', *Edith Stein Jahrbuch*, 3 (1997), 307-318. On Margarete Sommer and Gertrude Luckner and their work for Jews and Jewish converts see Michael Phayer; Eva Fleischner (eds): *Cries in the Night. Women Who Challenged the Holocaust*, Kansas City, 1997.

Catholic support for the persecuted Jews.³ The hierarchy's reluctance to oppose the regime was weaker whenever Catholic theology or ecclesiastical institutions were attacked, because the bishops believed that these spheres were legally (Concordat) and legitimately under their authority.⁴ Rosenberg's slander campaign against the Catholic Church from early 1935 onwards was such an occasion. The defence was often based on theological arguments, and the message of these pamphlets was directed at an internal Catholic audience, not the general public. There was, therefore, no need to prove loyalty to the National Socialist state by, for instance, indulging in antisemitic slander. The question arises whether the Church argued in favour of Jewry and Judaism when it found itself on a religious platform. It contributes to the wider debate of how Catholic Jew-hatred persisted at the time of the persecution of the Jews.⁵

4.1 Germany

The German Catholic Church had to act under an evolving dictatorship, with limited possibilities for public protests and even less scope for political resistance. The lack of sources 'from below' in a dictatorship complicates inquiries into public reactions to the regime and its antisemitic policies further. Yet Catholic public opinion during the Third Reich is paradoxically less contentious historically than the attitude of the institution itself.⁶ Particularly the acquiescence of the hierarchy during the early phase of the Third Reich, the lack of public condemnations of the Jewish

³ EAK, Josef Teusch Werke, *Katechismuswahrheiten*. Also Klemens-August Recker: *'Wem wollt ihr glauben?' Bischof Berning im Dritten Reich*, Paderborn, 1998, p. 250. On the churches and Rosenberg in general see Raimund Baumgärtner: *Weltanschauungskampf im Dritten Reich. Die Auseinandersetzung der Kirchen mit Alfred Rosenberg*, Mainz, 1977. For a very critical account see Stephen Haynes: 'Who Needs Enemies? Jews and Judaism in Anti-Nazi Religious Discourse', *Church History*, 71 (2002), 341-369.

⁴ Phayer: *Catholic Church*, p. 74. Burkhard van Schewick: 'Katholische Kirche und nationalsozialistische Rassenpolitik', in: *Die Katholiken und das Dritte Reich*, ed. by Klaus Gotto, Konrad Repgen, 2nd edn, Mainz, 1989, pp. 101-22, (p. 117).

⁵ Michael Phayer mentions the antisemitism of individual bishops (mostly in connection to their fear of Bolshevism) and the general rejection of the idea of an 'Aryan' Christ, but there is little directly on the persistence of anti-Jewish statements from 1936-1945. Phayer: *Catholic Church*, pp. 15-18.

⁶ On Catholics in particular see Heinz Boberach (ed.): *Berichte des SD und der Gestapo über Kirchen und Kirchenvolk: 1934-1944*, Mainz, 1971. On public opinion in general see David Bankier: *Probing the Depth of German Antisemitism. German Society and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1941*, New York, 2000. Ian Kershaw: *Popular Opinion and Dissent in the Third Reich. Bavaria 1933-1945*, Oxford, 2002. Robert Gellately: *Backing Hitler. Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*, Oxford, 2001.

persecution, while they were quite articulate in their defence of Catholic interests, or the surrender of baptism registers (thereby disclosing Jewish converts) into the hands of the authorities remain controversial issues. The motives behind this behaviour are interpreted very differently. Like Beth Griech-Polelle, John Cornwell and David Kertzer attribute the reluctance to aid the Jewish population to the nationalism and antisemitism of the bishops, combined with their exclusive concern to protect the Catholic Church in Germany. This argument often assumes that a firm condemnation of the Jewish persecution could have stirred public discontent in a similar manner as it managed to in the case of euthanasia. Consequently, the Holocaust could have been prevented or at least slowed down as a result of such a determined action.⁷ David Kertzer and Beth Griech-Polelle tend to isolate Jew-hatred as motive from the historical context and dismiss the restrictions of a dictatorship on individual and institutional freedom.⁸ Konrad Repgen, on the other hand, doubts whether the bishops could have stirred a public into revolt that had only shown apathy towards the persecution of the Jews.⁹ Together with John Conway he agrees, however, that the bishops usually acted out of a Catholic 'group rationale', but insist that neither the popes nor the bishops remained indifferent towards the fate of the Jews. The question of whether antisemitism was the reason why the Church leadership did not speak out in defence of German Jewry is often evaded in this interpretation. The emphasis is instead placed on the numerous occasions where the Vatican or single bishops did intervene in favour of Jews, implicitly reading this as a sign of philosemitism. Repgen sees the Church in Germany in an existential dilemma, encroached and persecuted by a totalitarian anti-Christian regime. In this reading the Church's own struggle against the National Socialist state, the lack of precise knowledge about the mass murder in the east (compared to the detailed information the bishops had on euthanasia) and the fear of endangering the existing aid channels for vulnerable refugees and 'non-Aryan' Christians were the main factors that moved

⁷ Beth Griech-Polelle calls it 'selective resistance'. Griech-Polelle: *Bishop von Galen*, p. 5. Cornwell: *Hitler's Pope*, pp. 121-23. Kertzer: *Unholy War*, pp. 264-93.

⁸ Their claim that antisemitism was a persuasive motive behind the Church's policies in the 1930s and 1940s is at times not upheld by the evidence they provided. Both often use nineteenth century anti-Jewish literature as evidence. (Griech Polelle even falls back on Protestant authors such as Stöcker or Treitschke to illustrate Catholic antisemitism.) This certainly establishes the long tradition of antisemitism in the Church that was to some extent still present in the early twentieth century. It is, however, difficult to assume that behaviour of individuals forty years later was informed by the same prejudice without providing evidence of antisemitic opinions related to the event at the time. Griech-Polelle: *Bishop von Galen*, pp. 99-100. For Kertzer see quote in Dietrich: 'Antisemitism', p. 424.

⁹ Repgen: 'German Catholicism', p. 225.

the German hierarchy not to condemn the persecution of the Jews in public.¹⁰ Instead, the Concordat of 1933 between the Vatican and Hitler remained the principal vehicle for ecclesiastical policy. According to Klaus Gotto and Konrad Repgen, this defensive strategy (primarily advocated by Cardinal Bertram, the Bishops Berning and Wienken and nuncio Cesare Orsenigo) secured the existence of the Church in Germany and thus its clandestine aid programmes. Moreover, in the eyes of Gotto and Repgen, they managed to sustain Christianity as a counter-ideology to National Socialism that rejected the regime's claim to the individual's body and soul.¹¹

Michael Phayer and Donald Dietrich offer a synthesis of these irreconcilable interpretations. In their opinion, antisemitism was an important factor that supported secular dehumanisation and therefore helped clear the path to the Holocaust. At the same time, they have recognised the Church's situation and the difficulties of the time when external factors, such as the radicalism of the totalitarian regimes, genocide, and the perceived threat of communism also contributed to Church policies.¹² With respect to the problematic issue of public protests, they doubt whether the Church could have prevented the Holocaust, but insist that early and clear condemnation could have reached more Catholics. Like Repgen, they agree that this would not have led to revolts, but such pronouncements could have moved more Catholics to aid the victims of the regime or at least to resist collaboration.¹³

Trying to read the minds of individuals or institutions in a past dictatorship is notoriously a minefield. Like Phayer and Dietrich, this chapter acknowledges both the restrictions the bishops had to face in Hitler's Germany and the occasions where

¹⁰ Ibidem, pp. 202-204. John Conway: 'The Churches and the Jewish People: Actions, Inactions and Reactions During the Nazi Era', in: *Comprehending the Holocaust*, ed. by Asher Cohen, Frankfurt, New York, 1988, pp. 125-43, (p.128, p. 139). Repgen: 'German Catholicism', pp. 197-226. The claim that the bishops did not know enough about the 'Final Solution' is not universally accepted. Michael Phayer, e.g., maintains that Church leaders knew of mass murder in the east by the end of 1942, but many bishops did not want to know more (e.g., Archbishop Gröber and Cardinal Bertram). He also mentions, that the Vatican kept information on gas chambers and death camps from the bishops. Phayer: *Catholic Church*, p. 71, p. 77.

¹¹ According to Hans Rothfels, this was the main and most important achievement of the Church's resistance. Cited in Klaus Scholder: 'The Church Struggle', in: *A Requiem for Hitler and other New Perspectives on the German Church Struggle*, essays by Klaus Scholder, London, 1989, pp. 95-129, (p. 120).

¹² Dietrich: 'Antisemitism', p. 425. Phayer: *Catholic Church*, pp. 222-25.

¹³ Phayer: *Catholic Church*, p. 217.

the hierarchy could have acted, but failed to do so. After all, the practice of the National Socialist state (in contrast to its aspirations) was not totalitarian from the start. According to Ludolf Herbst, Hitler's decision making was still considerably restricted during his first two years as Chancellor and the 'total state' was not achieved until 1938.¹⁴ Similar phases apply to the situation of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich. Hitler's initial aim was to co-ordinate the churches, hence the efforts to create a national (largely Protestant) German Church and the signing of a Reich Concordat with the Vatican.¹⁵ Yet the Concordat also guaranteed the religious and ecclesiastical interests of the Church and contributed, especially during the first two years of the Third Reich, to a quiet phase in church-state relations with little harassment on the part of the state and active co-operation by the churches.¹⁶ But after the Vatican's encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* and the failure to create one national Protestant German Church in 1937, Hitler grew tired of the churches and gradually gave in to the ambition of radical National Socialists to destroy the churches. The sense of persecution among the Church leadership was certainly not imagined. The Catholic Church in Germany faced increasing hostility from 1935 and physical attacks on its religious institutions and its priests from 1941.¹⁷

4.1.1 The Bishops and the Anti-Jewish Boycott of April 1933

The Catholic leadership had never felt at ease with the primacy of race in National Socialist cultural policy. They feared that under the current policy the measures taken against Jews could one day be meted out to the Catholic population.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Catholic leaders had been well aware of Hitler's antisemitism since the 1920s. In April 1933 Bishop Berning of Osnabrück was reminded by Hitler of the importance of 'solving' the 'Jewish question' in a meeting with the Führer.¹⁹ Yet the

¹⁴ This was often done with propaganda and terror, yet Hitler had to agree to temporary compromises in economic and foreign policy in order to realise his two main aims, the racial state and war. Ludolf Herbst: *Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland, 1933-1945*, Frankfurt, 1996, p. 79, p. 118, pp. 160-200.

¹⁵ Scholder: 'Church Struggle', pp. 98-99.

¹⁶ Hürten: *Kurze Geschichte*, pp. 212-27.

¹⁷ Scholder: 'Church Struggle', pp. 99-116.

¹⁸ Algermissen to Bertram, 31.3.1933. StadtAMG, 15/7/1.

¹⁹ Hitler had congratulated the Church on their efforts to fight Jewry in the past. The largest part of the interview was spent on the issue of future relations between the Church and the State. Berning did not

bishops let many chances pass to speak out against the new antisemitic policies of the regime during the phase of consolidation.

The reaction of the German hierarchy to the anti-Jewish boycott in April 1933 is a prominent example. The boycott was ushered in by pogrom-like riots – engineered by antisemitic circles of the NSDAP and SA – starting in Berlin and Silesia right after the March 1933 elections and spreading to other parts of Germany and from the streets to professional associations (law and medicine). Calls for anti-Jewish legislation grew louder.²⁰ Jewish pupils were attacked in schools by non-Jewish pupils, which caused the Baden Ministry for Culture and Education to condemn these violent excesses as un-Christian and un-nationalist.²¹ It was indeed often the violence and lawlessness of antisemitic attacks that disturbed the public.

Meanwhile, preparations to face the anti-Jewish boycott were undertaken at the highest level of the Catholic community. Shortly before the boycott began, the director of the Deutsche Bank – Oskar Wassermann – pleaded with Cardinal Bertram for episcopal intervention against the boycott. Bertram had three reservations about this request: first, little could be done anyway, since this was in Bertram's opinion an economic, not a religious struggle, where the potential disadvantages were well known to the Reich government. Second, siding with the Jewish community would be interpreted as unauthorised interference in national politics and would be very unpopular with the German population at large. Thirdly, the Jewish press in its turn had never spoken out against continuous persecution of Catholics worldwide.²²

After the boycott, Cardinal Faulhaber in Munich explained the passivity of the episcopate in a letter to Rome:

mention Hitler's antisemitic comments in his report to the hierarchy but reassured the bishops that the new state would protect Christian religion and lead the struggle against Bolshevism and the godless with energy and success. Ludwig Volk, Bernard Stasiewski (eds): *Akten deutscher Bischöfe über die Lage der Kirche 1933-1945*, 6 vols, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Zeitgeschichte, Reihe A, Mainz, 1968-85, I: 1933-34, pp. 100-102.

²⁰ Herbst: *NS Deutschland*, pp. 73-75.

²¹ It urged the Freiburg archdiocese to instruct their teachers that 'national revival' should advance along orderly procedures, even during the 'forced defence boycott'. Letter Ministry of Culture and Education, Karlsruhe, 31.3.1933 to Freiburg Archdiocesan Office. EAF, B2 / NS-51 Judenfrage.

²² Letter Bertram to Schulte (Cologne), Faulhaber (Munich), Gröber (Freiburg), Klein (Paderborn), Bamberg, 31.3.1933, cited from the copy in Archiv des Erzbistums Bamberg (AEB), 4416/8. Gröber's answer was: Bertram should proceed as said, however, with consideration for the innocent and converts. Faulhaber dismissed any intervention as pointless, as it would only worsen the situation. Stasiewski: *Bischöfe*, I, 43.

Our bishops are currently confronted with the question why the Catholic Church did not stand up for the Jews as it did so often in Church history. This is not possible at the moment because the fight against the Jews would at the same time turn into a fight against Catholics, and the Jews can help themselves as the cancellation of the boycott has shown.²³

In their inactivity, the bishops were piously following the Vatican's guideline not to endanger the negotiations of a Reich Concordat by upsetting the government.²⁴ But their silence during the boycott was not just to avoid reprisals against Catholics. In fact, at the time (the end of March 1933) the bishops could not help but assume that the new government would protect the Church's interests as had been promised by Hitler not more than ten days before the boycott. It is reasonable to assume that their reaction was to a considerable part prompted by their image of a powerful German Jewry that could well help itself, but had never used its power to assist the Church. The explanation given by Cardinal Faulhaber even suggests that he was persuaded by National Socialist propaganda that the boycott had to be ended because of international Jewish pressure on the German economy. An anti-Jewish undercurrent is even more likely if one considers the support given to Catholic small tradesmen (*Mittelstand*) by the Catholic parties and the bishops against Jewish department stores during the Weimar Republic.²⁵

4.1.2 The Bishops and the Persecution of the Jews. Failed Public Protests and Aid for 'non-Aryan' Catholics

Over the following eight years, it had become obvious that the regime was aiming for a racial solution to its 'Jewish question'. Parallel to an increased drive to encourage Jewish emigration, the regime introduced policies that led first to a racial segregation of the Jewish population based on the Nuremberg Laws in September

²³ Quoted in Recker: *Berning*, p. 54.

²⁴ For the purpose of this strategy see letter Gröber to Pacelli, 2.6.1934. Stasiewski: *Bischöfe*, I, 674.

²⁵ See numerous newspaper articles, dictionary entries, flyers like 'Christen, kauft bei Christen!' by pastor Kirchesch ('Die kath. Wehr', Konstanz), Mayen, Rheinland, also published in *Schönere Zukunft*, 2.6.1929. BayHStA, F1Slg 277, and episcopal reactions to petitions by Catholic small businessmen, which did not refute references against 'Jewish department stores' but called upon Catholics to buy at their local small Catholic shop. See in particular letter Karl Koch to Freiburg archdiocese, 18.3.1933 and response, 24.3.1933. More in file EAF, B2-29/20 Kirche & Staat. Soziale Aufgaben und Fragen.

1935, and after a range of discriminatory measures to the compulsory wearing of the Star of David in September 1941. The actual physical removal of German Jews and other 'non-Aryans' from German society began with the first deportations in October 1941. On the background of this ever-radicalising antisemitic policies it became increasingly difficult for the German Catholic hierarchy to retain their neutral position on the 'Jewish question', especially since racial discrimination was a principle the Vatican and the bishops had always rejected in their public statements. Moreover, tens of thousands of 'non-Aryan' Catholics would fall victim to these policies as a result of the Nuremberg Laws, leading to further isolation and victimisation of Jews and 'non-Aryan' Catholics.²⁶ The laws left Jewish converts with a stifling feeling of insecurity. For example, Hermann Liebherr, a non-Jewish director of a bank in the small town of Stockach near Lake Constance, despaired at the hostility his wife, a Jewish convert, encountered in public. He himself was pressured to resign from his post at the bank. Seeking help for the emigration of his family Liebherr wrote: 'The latest events have deeply disquieted my family and our relatives. My wife and my child haste through the streets like shy shadows while I get called a Jew's lackey (*Judenknecht*).'²⁷ In rural areas help could not always be expected from their chosen Catholic community, or from the local priest who seemed to ignore them or regard them as second-rate Catholics – sometimes out of fear of reprisals.²⁸

As Catholics, these Jewish converts stood under the protection of the Catholic bishops. The racial solution of the regime to the 'Jewish question' essentially cut across the neat separation of the religious sphere from the political sphere attempted in the Concordat. The treatment of 'non-Aryan' Catholics necessarily became a contentious subject between the state and the Church. The ever-increasing radicalisation of antisemitic policies also affected the Church directly. The ambition

²⁶ Wolfgang Benz estimates that in 1933 about 120,000 Christian Jews lived in the Reich, 90,000 of these were Protestants and about 26,000 were Catholic. Contemporary estimates were higher, ranging from 200,000 to 500,000 'non-Aryans'. Benz: 'Judenchristen', p. 313. The German bishops expected to care for 150,000 to 200,000 'non-Aryan' Catholics. Van Schewick: 'Katholische Kirche und Rassenpolitik', p. 110. Michael Phayer: 'Questions about Catholic Resistance', *Church History*, 70 (2001), 328-44, (p. 335).

²⁷ See, e.g., letter Hermann Liebherr, Stockach to Herr Kleiner, Konstanz, 24.11.1938. Liebherr's wife was a convert. EAF, B2-28/12 Kirch und Religion, Juden.

²⁸ See among others the anonymous letter of four 'non-Aryan' Catholics to Archbishop Gröber, 18.11.1937. They urged their bishop to declare publicly that the Church did not distinguish between 'Aryan' and 'non-Aryan' Catholics. EAF, B2-28/12.

to erase all Jewish influence from German society increased anti-clerical attacks defaming the Church for its Jewish roots. Yet the German bishops refrained from an open criticism of the National Socialist regime for many years. The following pages describe the initiatives taken by the episcopate in preparing public protests against the anti-clericalism of the regime and eventually the persecution of the Jews, as well as the practical aid offered to 'non-Aryan' Christians by Catholic organisations. The motivation behind most of these initiatives, their implementation or failure, often show a pre-occupation with the embattled situation of the Church and the limits set by the Concordat to a more public Catholic resistance. The bishops' strategic deliberations are placed side by side with their responses to the persecution of the Jews in order to learn how these events challenged their anti-Jewish attitudes. As already mentioned, some historians have attributed the silence of the German hierarchy to a dislike of Jews, though this causality has remained suggestive at times. The reactions to the persecution of the Jews are however a testament of the continuously negative image of the Jews despite the horror expressed by the bishops over the deportation of 'non-Aryans'.

Until 1937 the German Catholic bishops still hoped that the peace treaty between the Catholic Church and the National Socialist state in the form of the Concordat would hold. They were consequently determined to avoid anything that could be interpreted as fundamental criticism of the Third Reich and decided to stay out of politics and focus on ecclesiastical affairs instead. From April 1933 they neither supported National Socialist policies towards the Jews nor did they protest against these policies in public. Both the Nuremberg Laws and *Kristallnacht* passed without a public statement of the German bishops, as did attacks on representatives of the Catholic Church.²⁹ The strategy of the Vatican and Cardinal Bertram, as head of the Fulda bishops' conference (the gathering of German bishops apart from the Bavarian bishops who met at their own conference in Freising), was instead to dispatch a stream of petitions and complaints to the authorities pointing out the infringements imposed on the Church. So far, the majority of the bishops still recognised the

²⁹ The bishops remained silent when prominent Catholics were targeted, e.g., the murder of ministerial director Dr Erich Klausener, president of Catholic Action in Berlin, in connection with the so-called Röhm Putsch on 30 June 1934; or the attack on Cardinal Faulhaber's palace in Munich during *Kristallnacht*. Klaus Scholder: 'Political Resistance or Self-Assertion as a Problem for Church Governments', in: *Requiem*, pp. 130-39, (p. 132).

government as legal political authority that deserved obedience within a framework of the ethically permissible.³⁰ Cardinal Bertram and the episcopal leadership in the narrower sense were determined to avoid any threat to the Church's pastoral care by provoking the regime.³¹ The response of Cardinal Bertram to the Star of David decree (1 September 1941) illustrates this cautious approach well. The decree forced Jews and 'non-Aryans' to clearly mark their clothing with a Star of David, which inevitably led to a segregation of the Jewish population. Bertram generally objected to a physical segregation of Jewish converts and 'Aryan' Catholics within church buildings, and to the introduction of separate masses for 'non-Aryans'. In his pastoral guidelines, however, he advised Catholic priests that they should consider the advantages of holding separate masses, if the presence of 'non-Aryans' caused 'incredible difficulties', such as an ostentatious absence of civil servants and party members.³²

After the criticism of Hitler's Germany by Pius XI in the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* in 1937 the unanimity of the bishops' conference on how to deal with the National Socialist government began to fade. Konrad Preysing, the new Catholic bishop of Berlin, was particularly adamant that the bishops abandon diplomacy for public appeals on concrete political or ecclesiastical issues, thereby placing constant pressure on the regime. In 1937, he was not able to convince the majority of the bishops of this method. This changed four years later. Encouraged by the success of Bishop von Galen's public condemnation of the euthanasia programme, Preysing, Gröber, and Berning prepared a pastoral letter in defence of human rights in late August 1941. This time their proposal to publish their concerns found broad support among the bishops who were deeply disquieted about the murder of the mentally ill, the persecution of the Catholic Church in Poland and the occupied territories, and the increasing attacks on religious orders. Discontent among the Catholic population about the silence of the bishops in the face of National Socialist oppression might

³⁰ Scholder: 'Requiem', p. 158. Repgen: 'German Catholicism', p. 220.

³¹ The narrower leadership included nuncio Cesare Orsenigo, Bishop Berning, Bishop Wienken. Influential were Archbishop Gröber, Bishop von Galen, Archbishop Schulte of Cologne and Cardinal Faulhaber. With reservations the last two supported Cardinal Bertram in his cautious approach. Scholder: 'Requiem', p. 161. Repgen: 'German Catholicism', p. 221.

³² Statement of Bertram in response to the police decree of 1.9.1941 with respect to the Star of David, September 1941. See also letter Berning, 27.10.1941. Berning reported he had not witnessed any difficulties, but feared that 'non-Aryan' Catholics no longer came to mass. ABP, Juden, Nichtarier.

have been another reason to encourage the bishops to this.³³ Apart from the criticism of the persecution of the Jews, the letter was the boldest criticism the bishops had drafted so far. It contained complaints about the violation of basic human rights, such as the protection of property, personal freedom and the right to live.³⁴ Although the letter was supported by two thirds of the German bishops, it was never published in that form. Its publication was first postponed in November 1941 because Cardinal Bertram planned to join the Protestant churches in a last (and unsuccessful) attempt to persuade the government to end the persecution of the churches. When the publication of the pastoral letter was discussed again in February 1942, Cardinal Bertram could still not agree to publish it. Once the planned co-operation between the churches unravelled, Bertram probably felt that a public protest by the Catholic bishops alone would have little effect. This has also been suggested by Klaus Scholder who has assumed that Bertram preferred the diplomatic path because the Cardinal was convinced that anticlerical policies went against Hitler's will and that, for this reason, Hitler could be persuaded to end the persecution of the Church.³⁵

Drafted in summer 1941 several months before the first deportations of Jews and other 'non-Aryans', the blocked pastoral letter of autumn 1941 did not once refer to the persecution of the Jews. Yet at the same time the bishops were witnessing these radical antisemitic measures of the regime and neither condoned nor excused them. Indeed, their correspondence conveys their genuine horror at the deportation of Jews and Jewish converts alike. Still, underneath this shock their attitude towards 'the Jew' remained ambivalent, while the despair of 'non-Aryan' Catholics deeply affected them. Cardinal Faulhaber, who had supported the publication of the 1941 pastoral letter, expressed his anger about the brutal deportation of 'non-Aryans' from Munich in a letter to Cardinal Bertram in November 1941. He felt that these actions sullied the honour of Germany in history, because these 'non-Aryan' Catholics were innocent as individuals because they were 'born into a race which was cursed'.³⁶ Archbishop Gröber was equally shocked at the brutalised solution of the 'Jewish question'. He had tried to intervene with the administration on behalf of 'non-Aryan'

³³ See, e.g., Faulhaber to Bertram, 13.11.1941, AEB, Rep 1, no. 14, 71; or Gröber to Orsenigo, 5.11.1940. EAF, B2-28/12.

³⁴ Two thirds of the German bishops assented to publish the November draft of the 1941 pastoral letter. Scholder: 'Requiem', pp. 162-63.

³⁵ Scholder: 'Requiem', p. 164. Repgen: 'German Catholicism', pp. 222-23.

³⁶ Faulhaber to Bertram, 13.11.1941. AEB, Rep. 1, no. 14, 71.

Catholics during the deportation of Baden's Jews in October 1941. Having been unable to save Catholics from deportation, Gröber wrote to the bishops of Toulouse and Lyon (the deportees were interned near Toulouse) asking if they could not look after Catholics arriving in camps. At the same time the papal nuncio, Cesare Orsenigo, was asked to deliver Gröber's letters to Rome, urging the pope to act.³⁷ Gröber confided to Bishop Wienken in Berlin:

The deportation of Jews and Jewish Christians proceeds in a manner that appals every human sensation. Eighty Jews were accommodated in Hannover's morgues, in Berlin the passports of Jewish Christians were taken away. I am not a friend of Jews, but I experience this as a German disgrace in the way Christian human beings were treated. If you have the possibility to undertake anything in this matter – I don't know. If possible, I ask you to.³⁸

The bishops had tried to sound out possibilities to intervene in favour of 'non-Aryan' Christians in complaints to the authorities.³⁹ According to Bernhard van Schewick, Bertram dispatched four complaints about the deportation of 'non-Aryan' Catholics to various offices, including the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*) in 1942 and 1943.⁴⁰ True to his determination to work within the confines of the Concordat Bertram emphasised an ecclesiastical issue, in this case the sanctity of marriage that was threatened by plans to forcibly dissolve the marriages between Jews and Christians. This was followed by a reminder that such rights were guaranteed by the Concordat. Bertram finally acknowledged that he, too, saw the danger to German culture posed by the 'overgrowth of Jewish influence', but, he continued, according to natural law one has to honour the human rights of other races too.⁴¹

The persecution of the Jews was discussed at the bishops' conference in 1942, but the disgust of the bishops at the antisemitic measures was again not translated into

³⁷ See the various letters and petitions in EAF, B2-28/12.

³⁸ Gröber to Wienken, 31.10.1941. Ibidem.

³⁹ Van Schewick: 'Katholische Kirche und Rassenpolitik', p. 116. For example, Archbishop Gröber's efforts to find out where Gertrude Luckner – his manager for the welfare of 'non-Aryan' Catholics in Freiburg – had been taken to after a Gestapo raid. The Gestapo said it was not allowed to divulge such information and referred to higher authorities, while the local administration and Berlin responded that it was the local Gestapo and Gauleiter who were responsible for the execution of deportations. Liberating Gertrude Luckner from the concentration camp she had been taken to was similarly frustrated by a stalling administration. Gröber's correspondence in EAF, B2-28/12. For further examples see EAK, Gen II 8.4, 1a Nichtarier.

⁴⁰ Van Schewick: 'Katholische Kirche und Rassenpolitik', p. 117.

⁴¹ Bertram to Thierack, Frick, Muhs, 11.10.1942, as quoted in Leichsenring: 'Rosenstrasse', p. 42.

public protest. The conference decided against a public condemnation of the persecution of the Jews in favour of small successes, including the protection of Jews clandestinely.⁴² Cardinal Bertram felt there was no point in fighting the 'fundamental principle of [National Socialist] ideology' with Christian and legal arguments. Instead, the bishops should concentrate on ecclesiastical issues and broader concerns such as the violation of human rights.⁴³ Despite the genuine horror some bishops had expressed over the deportation of the Jews, the majority of the bishops had eventually given up on the Jews. The inhumanity of their physical and very visible persecution was intolerable to the bishops because it defied human rights and the German culture they had taken pride in. Yet judged on the basis of Gröber's and Faulhaber's comments it also seems as if the persecution of the Jews was almost accepted as part of their fate, which they, according to Christian teaching, had brought upon themselves. Finally, Cardinal Bertram's comment on an alleged dangerous Jewish influence in his complaints to the authorities in 1943 is difficult to grasp, given that by that time the hierarchy knew about the murders in concentration camps and ghettos. The comment was certainly part of the diplomatic discourse the bishops had adopted in their negotiations with the authorities. In the expectation to draw benevolent attention to their requests, the diplomatic discourse had deliberately mixed criticism of with consent to National Socialist policies. As Gerhard Besier has pointed out this did not necessarily mean that the bishops' approval should merely be interpreted as strategic necessity. After all, such strategies could only be successful if the argument was at least in parts credible and therefore convincing.⁴⁴ In this light, Bertram's comment in 1943 on undue Jewish influence acknowledged the regime's antisemitic phobia to the extent the bishops had always viewed the 'Jewish question'. But as he reminded the authorities that human rights of other races had to be honoured he made it quite clear that the then current antisemitic measures were unlawful. The sub-clause on an allegedly dangerous Jewish influence essentially reflects the antisemitic discourse of the interwar years and is a reminder that German

⁴² Phayer: 'Resistance', pp. 331-32.

⁴³ Van Schewick: 'Katholische Kirche und Rassenpolitik', p. 117. Cardinal Faulhaber likewise remarked that there was little choice since those who carried out the policy had completely absorbed the 'racial principle'. Faulhaber to Bertram, 13.11.1941. AEB, Rep. 1, no. 14, 71.

⁴⁴ Gerhard Besier specifically referred to the bishops' support for Hitler's intervention in the Spanish Civil War, which was consistent with their long-standing anti-communism. Gerhard Besier: 'Anti-Bolshevism and Antisemitism. The Catholic Church in Germany and National Socialist Ideology 1936-37', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43 (1992), 447-56.

Catholic bishops shared the then common socio-economic prejudices, but not an antisemitism that defied human rights.

News of the deportation and later of the murders in the ghettos in the east led individual bishops to re-assess the options for an episcopal public protest in the following year. By spring 1943, Bishop Preysing, together with Bishop Berning, Cardinal Faulhaber, and Bishop Dietz of Fulda discussed a proposal for a strong, explicit and public criticism of Hitler. Their point of departure was the fate of Christian Jews threatened by deportation, but the statement, Preysing insisted, 'must go clearly beyond that to include the atrocities against Jews in general'.⁴⁵ Margarete Sommer of the *Hilfswerk*, a Catholic relief organisation for 'non-Aryan' Catholics, prepared the proposal 'Draft for a Petition Favouring the Jews' on behalf of the bishops' conference in August 1943. Referring to the persecution of both Jews and 'non-Aryan' Christians, Preysing implored his fellow bishops to act, otherwise they would all 'stand guilty before God and man if [they were] silent'.⁴⁶ The draft was not to be published as a joint statement by the German bishops, largely out of a concern to protect the Catholic Church in Germany. Instead, the hierarchy published the November 1942 statement again, which was vaguer in tone and only spoke of 'other races' that should be treated humanely. Bertram remained an accommodationist and Sommer's draft was bound to provoke the regime. The Cardinal feared that such a step would weaken the position of the hierarchy to intercede with the government regarding the great number of imprisoned Catholic priests. Other bishops, for example Archbishop Gröber, felt that the Church was bound by the Concordat to restrict its activities to Church-related affairs. As the bishops could not agree on an approach, they eventually opted for the path of least resistance.⁴⁷ However, individual bishops, like Preysing and Frings in Cologne, were not content with another cautious public statement and condemned National Socialist antisemitic measures more explicitly in their sermons. Bishop Preysing also urged the papal nuncio and Pius XII himself to exert their influence on Cardinal Bertram in favour of

⁴⁵ Phayer: 'Resistance', p. 332. Bishop Berning knew about deaths in concentration camps from February 1942: 'Many shot. There seems to be the plan to eradicate Jewry completely. What can be done? Can the bishops read a public condemnation of these events from the pulpit?' BAOS, 03-17-72-72, 25; quoted in Recker: *Berning*, p. 335.

⁴⁶ Michael Phayer: 'The Catholic Resistance Circle in Berlin and German Catholic Bishops during the Holocaust', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 7 (1993), 216-28, (p. 224).

⁴⁷ Ibidem, pp. 224-28.

a joint pro-Jewish statement – to no avail. Orsenigo reminded Preysing that ‘charity is well and good but the greatest charity is not to make problems for the Church’.⁴⁸

Public protests against antisemitic measures by the hierarchy were ostensibly absent at the time, but in the case of ‘non-Aryan’ Catholics this silence did not imply that the bishops and Catholic organisations passively stood by. Individual bishops assisted ‘non-Aryan’ Catholics in particular cases in finding new work or financial assistance.⁴⁹ Existing Catholic charitable organisations, like the *Caritas*, cared for Catholics who found themselves persecuted for their links to political Catholicism or their Jewish background. It provided financial assistance and helped those driven into unemployment to find work. The *Caritas* worked closely with the *St. Raphaelsverein*, a Catholic organisation that assisted Catholics in their wish to emigrate since 1871.⁵⁰ Out of this co-operation grew the *Hilfssausschuss für katholische Nichtarier* (Relief Committee for non-Aryan Catholics) in 1935 that co-ordinated the aid efforts, encouraged monasteries to employ young ‘non-Aryan’ Catholics, and generally assisted those willing to emigrate by obtaining passports, visa, and providing re-training for prospective émigrés. The report for 1938/39 of the *Hilfssausschuss* accounted for 830 people who had been taken to safe places. Two hundred women were able to emigrate to England, while a further two hundred persons were liberated from concentration camps and helped to emigrate to Holland.⁵¹ Although the *Hilfssausschuss* disregarded race (as defined by the National Socialist regime) in its aid provision, it is interesting to note that it could not escape the pervasive race science at the time and intentionally or unintentionally worked according to a racial rationale. In a discussion on possible host countries for ‘non-Aryan’ Catholics at the founding session of the *Hilfssausschuss*, Bishop Berning gave to consider that ‘[it] might be useless to accommodate them in older settlements, where aryan Catholics live and where disputes over racial questions might disturb a

⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 224.

⁴⁹ For personal efforts see Gröber’s help to find employment for Max Hecht, and visas to Buenos Aires for Mr and Mrs Rosenfeld. EAF, B2-28/12.

⁵⁰ The *Raphaelsverein* had its main seat in Hamburg with further branches in Bremen and Freiburg, and seventy counselling centres throughout Germany. Van Schewick: ‘Katholische Kirche und Rassenpolitik’, pp. 110-11. On the *Raphaelsverein* see Lutz-Eugen Reutter: *Katholische Kirche als Fluchthelfer. Die Betreuung von Auswanderern durch den St Raphaelsverein*, Recklinghausen, 1971.

⁵¹ Minutes of the Plenary Conference of the German Bishops in Fulda, 17.-19.8.1938. EAF, B2-28/12. The *Hilfssausschuss* was funded through donations and offertories from Catholics, but a considerable amount of the money needed was provided by the Reich Association of Jews. 1938 Report of the *Hilfssausschuss*. ABP, Juden, Nichtarier; also report in EAF, B2/NS-51.

peaceful development.’⁵² Such a rationale was indeed not unique to Catholic German aid organisations. In fact, the British government encountered similar arguments from a number of British colonies when it sought to find Jewish settlements in South America, Africa or Australasia.⁵³

Unlike the leaders of the German Evangelical Church, the Catholic bishops actively engaged with the aid efforts for ‘non-Aryan’ Catholics.⁵⁴ New antisemitic laws were answered with renewed aid efforts as in the case of the *Hilfssausschuss* that was created in the wake of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935. Attempts of the regime to stifle Catholic work for ‘non-Aryans’ was met with determined perseverance by the bishops and Catholic organisations. When changes to tax laws in 1938 forced the *Caritas* to end its financial support for ‘non-Aryan’ Catholic émigrés, its work was taken over by the *Raphaelsverein* and strengthened through a newly-founded aid organisation, the Special Relief of the Diocese of Berlin (*Hilfswerk beim bischöflichen Ordinariat Berlin*). The creation of the *Hilfswerk* was initiated by Bishop Wienken, the episcopal representative to the government, Bishop Preysing of Berlin, and Bishop Berning of Osnabrück. Michael Phayer has suggested that the *Hilfswerk* was a conscious response to help ‘non-Aryan’ Catholics after *Kristallnacht*.⁵⁵ Although the *Hilfswerk* worked subsidiary to the *Raphaelsverein*, it was under the direct control of the Bishop of Berlin, Konrad von Preysing, an arrangement which gave it the best possible protection from state interference.⁵⁶ Indeed, while the *Raphaelsverein* was forcibly dissolved on 25 June 1941, the *Hilfswerk* could continue its work for ‘non-Aryan’ Catholics and Jews.⁵⁷

⁵² Minutes of the Founding Session of the *Hilfssausschuss für katholische Nichtarier*, Berlin, 22.3.1935. EAF, B2/NS-51.

⁵³ Bernard Wasserstein: *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, 2nd edn, London, 1999, p. 25, p. 35.

⁵⁴ The German Evangelical Church encouraged ‘non-Aryan’ Protestants to organise their own associations that were from the start under the control of the Gestapo and without institutional ecclesiastical support helpless against the National Socialist regime. The last organisation, *Büro Pfarrer Grüber*, was closed after the arrest of Pfarrer Grüber in 1940. The German Evangelical Church eventually capitulated in the face of the regime’s antisemitic policies in 1941 when it advised its ‘non-Aryan’ members to distance themselves from the Church, because, it argued, the Church could not withstand the popular sentiment of racial awareness. Benz: ‘Judenchristen’, pp. 308-17. Ursula Büttner: *Die verlassenen Kinder der Kirche. Der Umgang mit Christen jüdischer Herkunft im Dritten Reich*, Göttingen, 1998.

⁵⁵ According to the books of the *Hilfswerk* it was able to assist about 2,500 persons in the years 1938-45. Leichsenring: ‘Rosenstrasse’, p. 42. Phayer: ‘Catholic Resistance Circles’, p. 216.

⁵⁶ Similar organisations existed in Breslau, Oppeln, Cologne, Frankfurt Main, Munich. Benz: ‘Judenchristen’, p. 315.

⁵⁷ Van Schewick: ‘Katholische Kirche und Rassenpolitik’, p. 110. Leichsenring: ‘Rosenstrasse’, p. 41.

The *Hilfswerk* was managed by Canon Bernhard Lichtenberg who had continuously given his support to 'non-Aryan' Catholics and Jews. After his arrest on 23 October 1941 'on account of hostile activity against the state', Margarete Sommer, a social worker with the *Caritas*, filled his position. Together with the *Raphaelsverein*, the *Hilfswerk* had primarily assisted 'non-Aryan' Catholics in their efforts to emigrate. At times they also co-operated with the Protestant organisation for 'non-Aryan' Christians, *Büro Pfarrer Grüber*, the Quaker Society of Friends, and the Reich Association of Jews.⁵⁸ In the years from 1934 to 1939, the organisations received over 100,000 applications for aid, but only managed to assist 12,000 to emigrate, largely because it was increasingly difficult to obtain the relevant papers, such as passports from the German authorities and visa from the host countries.⁵⁹ Initially the *Hilfswerk* was primarily created for 'non-Aryan' Catholics, which was not unusual, since every religious community had traditionally cared for their own destitute members.⁶⁰ The *Raphaelsverein* and the *Hilfswerk*, however, also assisted non-Christian Jews. In 1939 and 1940 almost half of those aided were non-Christian Jews, as were 20% of those who emigrated through these organisations.⁶¹ After emigration was prohibited from 23 October 1941, the work of the *Hilfswerk* necessarily had to change in character. Margarete Sommer on one hand dedicated her work to help those facing deportation by offering spiritual and material help. At a time when German society was increasingly atomised as a result of the regime's joint measures of propaganda and terror, the *Hilfswerk* in Berlin promised to look after the property of the deportees until their return and distributed circular letters to parish members with the names of those who were deported so that they could send on parcels of food and goods.⁶² More importantly, Margarete Sommer, together with the support of Bishops Preysing and Berning, attempted to influence the German bishops to protest against National Socialist antisemitic measures. Through contacts to resistance groups and leaks by Hans Globke, Bernhard Loesener, and SS Officer Kurt Gerstein, Sommer had gathered information on the murders in the ghettos and

⁵⁸ Leichsenring: 'Rosenstrasse', p. 39.

⁵⁹ During the period of maximum emigration the *Raphaelsverein* spent RM 560,000 on emigration efforts. Phayer: 'Catholic Resistance Circles', pp. 219-20.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, p. 219.

⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 219.

⁶² Ibidem, p. 220.

camps in the east by summer 1942, which were duly passed on to Cardinal Bertram and the bishops' conference.⁶³

It is remarkable that the blocked pastoral letter of autumn 1941 against the regime's anticlerical policy and disregard for human rights was supported by most German bishops, but that this near unanimity was gone two years later when a similar appeal would also have condemned the treatment of the Jews. A few observations stand out in this sequence of events. It is misleading to speak of the silence of the bishops as they spoke out against the regime's anticlerical and inhumane policies on various occasions. Furthermore, Catholic organisations under the protection of the bishops offered assistance to 'non-Aryan' Christians and (to a lesser degree) Jews, which was as such a defiance of racial antisemitism. Although the plan to jointly condemn the persecution of the Jews failed, bishops such as Preysing and Frings did not remain silent on this matter either. Preysing, opposed to the regime from the start, had urged the bishops to publicise their criticism as early as 1933, and at the opportune moment after the seemingly successful anti-euthanasia campaign in autumn 1941 he was even able to move a majority of the bishops to abandon their cautious diplomatic strategy. Unlike bishops who shut out information on the 'final solution', as for example Gröber or Bertram, Preysing (one might add Berning and Faulhaber) had no doubt that common humanity obliged the episcopate to condemn the murder of the Jews publicly.⁶⁴ Cardinal Bertram, on the other hand, was of an older generation, marked by the *Kulturkampf* and the inclination to prove Catholic loyalty to the German state, never lost his faith in Hitler's leadership and consequently trusted the bureaucratic, law-abiding path of protest more than an appeal to a public he deeply distrusted. Although the relevance of the individual in these single initiatives is noticeable – especially in the case of Preysing – an ultimate feeling of irrelevance in the face of the arbitrary terror of the regime is all too obvious in Bertram's decisions of the 1940s. This experience was not to be

⁶³ She and Bishop Preysing were in contact with the conservative Kreisauer Circle, the Munich Jesuits around Fr Alfred Delp. Ibidem, pp. 220-22.

⁶⁴ On how much the bishops wanted and could know see Scholder: 'Requiem', p. 119; Repgen: 'German Catholicism', pp. 224-25. Michael Phayer has stressed that the Vatican had kept more detailed information on the extent of the genocide and the gas chambers from the German bishops. Phayer: *Catholic Church*, p. 77.

underestimated during the war.⁶⁵ Although the regime apparently hesitated to touch the bishops, it found an easier and more vulnerable target in the lower clergy and religious orders.⁶⁶

The structural limitations placed upon the bishops' decisions by a totalitarian regime grew tighter over the years and overshadowed their actions and inactions especially in the 1940s. By the time the hierarchy eventually awoke to the brutal consequences of National Socialist antisemitism the opportunities for public protests or effective interventions had become too risky in the eyes of the Church leadership. Other factors such as the Concordat, patriotism and some ideological overlap with National Socialism, especially in the fear of Bolshevism, contributed to the acquiescence of the Church in the early years of the Third Reich and inhibited any significant resistance in later years.⁶⁷ Anti-Jewish attitudes, in a traditional form as religious anti-Judaism and the more modern form of economic and cultural antisemitism, also played a role in the inactivity of the German bishops. This was particularly apparent in their response to the boycott of Jewish businesses in April 1933 and the horror expressed at the deportation of Jews and 'non-Aryan' Christians in autumn 1941 both revealed a deeply ambiguous image of Jewry shaped by Christian theology and personal prejudices. On the other hand, it also showed that the bishop perceived the Jews as part of a common humanity whose basic rights were not to be infringed. The bishops did not share the eliminatory, racist antisemitism of the regime, but their sensitivity towards the regime's early antisemitic measures had been low, and it can be assumed that their own antipathy coupled with a Catholic group rationale aided this insensitivity. The influence of a theology that saw in Jewry a people cursed by god for its deicide should likewise not be underestimated in an explanation for the bishops' responses to the persecution of the Jews. Especially in the 1940s it appears as if the bishops had given up on the Jews, not just because they thought it was too dangerous to condemn their persecution, but because their suffering was seen as the

⁶⁵ Herbst has claimed that the regime's dual measures of propaganda and terror were more pronounced during the war. Herbst: *NS Deutschland*, pp. 160-200.

⁶⁶ Only 9,78% of concentration camp inmates were members of the higher clergy., while about 35% of secular priests (those not organised in a religious order) had been subject to the regime's penal system. Ulrich von Hehl: *Priester unter Hitlers Terror. Eine biographische und statistische Erhebung. Im Auftrag der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz unter Mitwirkung der Diözesanarchive*, Mainz, 1984, p. 74. Griech-Polelle: *Bishop von Galen*, p. 63, pp. 88-89.

⁶⁷ Phayer: *Catholic Church*, p. 68.

manifestation of their eternal fate. The Church leadership in Germany generally failed to see that Christian anti-Judaism and cultural antisemitism could no longer be treated as separate from National Socialist racial antisemitism once the latter had become state ideology – the initiative of Bishops Preysing and Berning in favour of a public condemnation of the persecution of the Jews in 1943 was the exception. The reference to an alleged negative Jewish influence by Cardinal Bertram in 1943 is one example of this rationale, the defence against Rosenberg's claim of a conspiracy between 'Rome and Judah' against National Socialist Germany is another. Chronologically, the defence against *völkisch* anti-Catholicism falls between the bishops' response to the 1933 boycott and the preparations for an episcopal public protest described above. It shows how an essentially theological discourse continued to harbour antisemitism.

4.1.3 The Catholic Defence against Rosenberg

The 1933 Concordat had guaranteed the Church's freedom within an ecclesiastical sphere, and even if the treaty was soon obliterated by the regime's actions, the hierarchy still considered this sphere rightfully and lawfully theirs and were quite prepared to defend this limited space. The failure of the hierarchy to criticise the persecution of the Jews publicly has been attributed either to the intransigence of the regime regarding one of the core elements of its ideology, or to the Concordat that excluded any direct political resistance on the part of the bishops.⁶⁸ It remains to be seen whether the ecclesiastical and theological space safeguarded by the Concordat was used to defend Jews and Judaism. Such an occasion was offered when the Catholic Church in Germany tried to defend itself against Alfred Rosenberg's campaign against the Church and the 'Jewish' Old Testament. By defending its own tradition, the Church was also inadvertently given the opportunity to speak up for the Jews in a primarily religious context. A display of solidarity that ignored supposedly racial differences would have been a living example for a steadfast condemnation of National Socialist race ideology by the Church. The following section looks at the literature and pamphlets published in defence of the Church. It examines the image

⁶⁸ Scholder: 'Political Resistance', p. 131. Van Schewick: 'Katholische Kirche und Rassenpolitik', p. 120.

of 'the Jew' in these publications and assesses to what extent the defence of the Old Testament was also a defence of Judaism.

Alfred Rosenberg, editor of the NSDAP newspaper *Völkische Beobachter*, had established himself as the guardian of National Socialist *Weltanschauung* in the 1920s. On 24 January 1934 he was appointed the Führer's Delegate for the Entire Intellectual and Philosophical Education and Instruction of the National Socialist Party. A more significant political position awaited him in July 1941 when he was appointed Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories. Both churches rightly saw in Rosenberg an exponent of the radical anti-Christian forces within the party that hoped to see Christianity eliminated from German society. His main work *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* described world history as nothing but the history of races. His 'myth of the blood' claimed superiority over 'the ancient sacraments', and declared Judaism and Christianity as the mortal enemies of the Teutonic soul.⁶⁹ Not surprisingly, the Catholic bishops were bitterly opposed to the introduction of Rosenberg's *Myth* as required reading for party circles and education programmes – without much success. On the contrary, the Church felt more victimised after Rosenberg began a propaganda campaign against the Christian churches and Christianity as such in 1935.⁷⁰

The argument over Rosenberg's *Myth* sought to secure the integrity of Catholic teaching and the freedom to live according to its rules. It was also one facet of the general attempt by the German bishops to protect the remaining Catholic associations from closure or incorporation into National Socialist organisations.⁷¹ Even the influence of the regime on the curriculum was soon felt; apparently even in Catholic religious education teachers began to exclude the Old Testament from their classes.⁷² At National Socialist training camps, such as those of the NSDStB

⁶⁹ Robert Wistrich: *Who's Who in Nazi Germany*, London, 1995, pp. 209-12.

⁷⁰ On main stages of the Church's struggle with the state see John Conway: *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches 1933-45*, London, 1968, pp. 95-116, pp. 140-232.

⁷¹ Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 193. Hürten: *Kurze Geschichte*, pp. 222-29.

⁷² Minutes Diocesan Conference Freiburg, 5.-7.6.1934. EAF, B2-56/2.

(National Socialist German Student Union) the curriculum was overtly anti-clerical and antisemitic.⁷³

Uriel Tal has suggested that even though the *Myth of the Twentieth Century* had no significant impact on the National Socialist leadership, its intense public discussion in hundreds of books, pamphlets, speeches, and sermons had a pragmatic effect. For the regime it was a means of divide and rule as this discussion focused the attention of Protestants and Catholics on a minor personality and his thoughts. On the other hand, the debate about Rosenberg gave the churches the chance to express their opposition to various ideological aspects of National Socialism and even Church policies without provoking a hostile response from the regime.⁷⁴ It is quite evident from the Catholic defence literature that the struggle against Rosenberg stood for much more than just a critique of the *Myth*. It was a criticism of the violation of the Concordat in the regime's persecution of the Church. Yet at the same time it was often an attempt to justify the existence of Christian churches within a National Socialist Germany by emphasising the ancient positive relationship between Germandom and the Christian faith.

The responses the bishops received from faithful Catholics on this matter make it quite clear that the anti-clerical campaigns of the regime were not uncritically adopted, on the contrary. Especially those sections of the Catholic community who had shown steadfast opposition to National Socialism prior to 1933 were particularly emphatic in their impatience with the bishops and their cautious response to such attacks on the Catholic faith. For example, a group of Krupp workers in Essen aired their anger and frustration at the situation in a letter to the Cologne diocese. The object of their anger was the article 'The Jewish Tradition and Us' (published in *Ruhrarbeiter*, August 1938, by a Professor v. Leers), the source of their anger was the dismissal of the bible as a collection of legends: 'The Christian faith and Christian religion are attacked and we have the duty to defend both at all costs. This is the desire of numerous Catholic workers which long for the clergy to help them in

⁷³ Participants at similar training camps were usually asked to bring along the 'fundamental works of National Socialism (*Mein Kampf*, *Mythos*)'. In: 'Merkblatt für die Teilnehmer' (received, 15.2.1935). EAK, Gen 22.3b, 1.

⁷⁴ Uriel Tal: 'Aspects of Consecration of Politics in the Nazi Era', in: *Judaism and Christianity under the Impact of National Socialism*, ed. by Otto Dov Kulka; Paul Mendes Flohr, Jerusalem, 1987, pp. 63-95, p. 83.

taking up this responsibility where they cannot defend their faith on their own.’⁷⁵ Bishop Simon Konrad of Passau was similarly frustrated about the lack of religious enlightenment on the matter.⁷⁶

It is important for the following discussion to stress at this point that such responses did not mention the antisemitism present in these campaigns.

The struggle of the Catholic Church against Rosenberg’s anti-clericalism peaked in the years 1934 to 1936. At their plenary conference in June 1934 the bishops decided how they were to face the influence of anti-clerical literature on youth education. An information centre on anti-Church policies (*Kirchliche Informationsstelle der bischöflichen Behörden*) in Berlin did not just register anti-clerical acts and statements but also served as platform for negotiations with government representatives.⁷⁷ In these negotiations the Reich government was to be reminded of its obligation to protect Catholic religious life. Pastoral letters were to address the public and emphasise the necessity of Christian education particularly among youth organisations. Numerous pastoral letters and sermons strongly condemned the anti-Christian ideology of Rosenberg and the advance of neo-heathendom. A good example is Bishop Vogt of Aachen at a Catholic youth meeting in October 1934: ‘The new apostles who want to bring us this new faith are divided amongst themselves and only united in their dislike and hate of the Catholic faith. This new faith should be based on blood, and race, and soil. These are empty claims and [...] words. What they claim to be faith [...] is a solely human fabrication.’⁷⁸ This education was to be supported by suitable pamphlets and lectures that highlighted Rosenberg’s errors.

⁷⁵ Letter Krupp workers, Essen, to Cologne diocesan office, 12.8.1938. EAK, Gen 22.13,5.

⁷⁶ Bibeltagung 1938. ABP, OA NL Bf Simon Konrad 381. It is important to distinguish between different social standing and political attitudes of Catholics in this context, because the Cologne diocesan administration also received reports about Catholics who disseminated Rosenberg’s anti-Christian mysticism. These were either writers, clerks, or active Catholic NSDAP members. File EAK, Gen 22.3b, 1.

⁷⁷ Conference (5.-7.6.1934, Fulda) notes as cited in Stasiewski: *Bischöfe*, I, p. 695, p. 701. On *Kirchliche Informationsstelle* see EAK, CR 2.19, 33. Cardinal Bertram sent numerous complaints to Hitler and various Reich ministers about infringements on Catholic social life in schools, associations and publications. See, e.g., Bertram to Hitler, 20.8.1936. EAF, B2-28/12.

⁷⁸ BDA, Aba Bischof Vogt, 17,1 Predigten. Bishop Simon Konrad of Passau in ABP, OA NL Bf Simon Konrad 381.

The following section will not focus on the diplomatic exchanges between the Church hierarchy and the government, as this has been well documented by the *Kommission für Zeitgeschichte*.⁷⁹ The following pages examine instead the nature of the discourse in Catholic religious education and the extent to which that discourse did or did not offer a defence of Germany's Jews. Numerous books were published in the course of the Church's struggle against Rosenberg that explained the relationship between Christianity, Germanism, and Judaism.⁸⁰ Recommended in local ecclesiastical newsbulletins and lay organisations, they were most likely read by the clergy and Catholics still embedded in the organisational structure of German Catholicism. After a brief introduction of the more well-known defence literature, the following pages largely discuss the arguments contained in two educational pamphlets, the *Katechismuswahrheiten* and the *Nathanaelfrage*, which were designed to reach Catholic youth (they were distributed to communicants) as well as ordinary churchgoers. Thanks to their simple language, their wide distribution and their use in religious instruction, the two pamphlets reached a wide audience. The *Kathechismuswahrheiten* reached a circulation of five to six million in 1936.⁸¹ Because of the anticipated censorship by the government, the booklets were distributed at church doors, handed out to all children over ten years old and to all communicants.⁸² Indeed, on 21 January 1936, the police confiscated the booklet at the print shop in Bad Godesberg. By then the *Kathechismuswahrheiten* had been distributed in the millions and the instruction of Catholics along the lines of the booklet went ahead undisturbed.⁸³

4.1.3.1 Defence Methods: The *Katechismuswahrheiten* and The *Nathanaelfrage*

⁷⁹ Baumgärtner: *Weltanschauungskampf*, Mainz, 1977. For printed documents see Ludwig Volk, Bernhard Stasiewski (eds): *Akten deutscher Bischöfe über die Lage der Kirche 1933-1945*, 6 vols, Mainz, 1968-85.

⁸⁰ Recommended (in the Osnabrück diocese) literature against Rosenberg's *Mythos*: Michael Wächter: *Studie zu den beiden Schriften Alfred Rosenbergs*, Seekirch, (n.d.); Konrad Algermissen: *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Hannover, 1934; Anton Koch: 'Mythos und Wirklichkeit', *Stimme der Zeit*, September 1935; Franz Nieskens: *Mythos und Wirklichkeit*. All in *Kirchliches Amtsblatt für das Bistum Osnabrück*, 25.11.1935, p. 7.

⁸¹ Report on *Katechismuswahrheiten*, EAK, Gen 22.13, 4. Greive set the circulation at seven million prints. Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 200.

⁸² 'Die Verwertung der *Katechismuswahrheiten*', and letter Cologne *Generalvikariat*, September 1936, both in EAK, Gen 22.13, 4.

⁸³ Letter to Reich Ministry for Church Affairs, 23.11.1936. EAK, Gen 22.13, 4.

The accusation that the Catholic Church was 'jewified' (*verjudet*) had been a common phrase of the *völkisch* movement throughout the Weimar Republic.⁸⁴ During the Republic, these accusations were rigorously denounced by political Catholicism often followed by their classic response to the 'Jewish question' namely that the Centre Party was committed to religious tolerance and honoured religious Jews but deplored the excesses of 'degenerate' (*entartet*) liberal Jewry.⁸⁵ Cardinal Faulhaber had likewise tasted the violent anti-Catholicism of the early National Socialist movement. After the failed putsch in November 1923, the Cardinal was accused of conspiring together with the Jews against the *völkisch* movement. For months, the *völkisch* press and orators denounced 'Rome and Judah' as their conniving enemies, and even Faulhaber's residence came under attack on several occasions.⁸⁶ In response, Faulhaber and his supporters vehemently rejected any Jewish influence on the Cardinal or the Church, trying to cut the bond between 'Rome and Judah' alleged in these *völkisch* attacks.⁸⁷

The defence literature against the early *völkisch* movement was still used during the Third Reich but was now supplemented by further publications.⁸⁸

The arguments in the *Kathechismuswahrheiten* and the *Nathanaelfrage* were in many ways modelled on Cardinal Faulhaber's Christmas sermons in 1933. Indeed Faulhaber contributed to the creation of the two pamphlets with direct suggestions on wording and content.⁸⁹ At the time, Faulhaber's sermons were the best-known defence of the Old Testament and explanation of the relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Germandom.⁹⁰ In the introduction to the collected sermons

⁸⁴ The publication of J.A. Kofler's *Katholische Kirche und Judentum* in 1928 was such an example. It caused quite a stir and remained successful during the Third Reich. The book was a collection of 'facts' that 'proved' the Jewish influence within the Catholic parties, the Jesuits and the Vatican. It claimed that baptism did not override the racial marks of Jewry and that Jesus was definitely not a Jew.

⁸⁵ For a critique of Kofler's book see Peter Pfeiffer (Centre Party MP, Baden): 'Herr Dr Kofler commits in his text the – for a Catholic theologian – unforgivable mistake, not to distinguish – in his party-political blindness – between the orthodox and the *entartet*, liberal Jewry.' Pfeiffer continued that he deplored any form of immorality no matter whether indulged in by Christians or Jews. Pfeiffer's letter to the Freiburg archdiocese, 7.11.1929. EAF, B2/NS-51 Judenfrage.

⁸⁶ Hastings: 'How Catholic', p. 423.

⁸⁷ Ibidem, pp. 424-35.

⁸⁸ Well known amongst the older literature were Jakob Nötges: *Nationalsozialismus und Katholizismus*, Cologne, 1931. Alfons Steiger: *Der neudeutsche Heide im Kampf gegen Christen und Juden*, Berlin, 1924. Compared to Steiger's earlier book *Katholizismus und Judentum* this revised second edition refrained largely from antisemitic statements. Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 89.

⁸⁹ Ludwig Volk: *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers, 1917-1945*, 2 vols, Mainz, 1976-78, II: 1935-45, p. 298.

⁹⁰ Michael Faulhaber: *Judentum, Christentum, Germanentum. Adventspredigten*, Munich, 1934.

published in 1934, Faulhaber differentiated between the Jewish people before and after Christ's death. The former were the 'Chosen People', the bearer of god's revelation, the latter were the god-forsaken people who denied and crucified Christ. Faulhaber emphasised that he was only speaking of the 'Chosen People'.⁹¹ The relation between Judaism and Christianity was in Christ, who Faulhaber described as the cornerstone between the two – marking the end ('omega') to Judaism and a new beginning in Christianity.⁹² Faulhaber neither denied the Jewish origin of Jesus Christ nor did he completely divorce Christianity from its Jewish roots. But he distinguished between a god-fearing and cursed Jewish people. The sermons have since been celebrated as a critique of National Socialism and the anti-Jewish policy of the regime, which they are only to a limited extent. His criticism was largely aimed at the anti-clericalism of the regime and its excessive racial hatred. In the printed collection of the sermons, Faulhaber insisted that the Church was not opposed to an 'honest race science' that did not incite hatred against other peoples or preach against Christianity.⁹³ The Cardinal's sermons were certainly not a defence of modern Jewry as he consciously skirted this issue by stressing that he was only speaking of the biblical Jews.⁹⁴ The defence of ancient Jewry was simultaneously a defence of the roots of Christianity and therefore of the Christian churches in modern times, but not of modern Jewry.

In contrast with Faulhaber's sermons, other Catholic publications more obviously tried to reconcile Catholicism with the new emphasis on *Volk* and race, if not even with the new National Socialist government. Konrad Algermissen's volume on Germandom and Christendom was a typical example. With respect to the new government, Algermissen wrote: 'The god-given natural values of our German

⁹¹ Ibidem, pp. 10-11.

⁹² Ibidem, pp. 88-92.

⁹³ He insisted that Christianity was universal and accessible to all people. Faulhaber: *Judentum, Christentum, Germanentum*, p. 116. Also quoted in Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 203. Greive however did not refer to the restrictions Faulhaber placed on race science and saw in this sermon an uncritical endorsement of race science. Other theologians who deplored racial doctrines but pointed at the same time at the similarities between German religion and historical Christianity in Germany include e.g. Dr Hugo Dausend, OFM: *Germanische Frömmigkeit in der kirchlichen Liturgie*, Wiesbaden, 1936. Anton Stonner: *Die deutsche Volksseele im christlichdeutschen Volksgebrauch*, Munich, 1935.

⁹⁴ Günter Lewy refers to a letter by the secretary of the Cardinal to the Jewish World Congress, in which the secretary insisted that Faulhaber 'did not refer to the Jewish question of today' in his sermons. Günter Lewy: *Die katholische Kirche und das Dritte Reich*, Munich, 1965, p. 303. Quoted in Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 203.

people are embodied in the swastika, the national emblem of a German Reich that is conscious of its new strength (*Volkskraft*) and that strides towards a new national ascent (*Aufstieg*).⁹⁵ The book is strewn with *völkisch* rhetoric and approaches the topic not from a religious perspective but from that of race theory. Christianity's roots in Judaism received little attention. Algermissen even argued that Christianity was certainly not a Jewish religion, but was intrinsically linked with Germandom.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, while Algermissen clearly tried to marry race science with Christianity, he maintained the principle of the supremacy of the soul over race. He was, however, not very consistent in his argument and eventually left the supremacy of the state over ethical issues unchallenged. This was most obvious in his comment on the status of 'non-Aryan' Christians. Algermissen on one hand was adamant that they were equal to 'Aryan' Christians as no-one would be judged according to his blood in Christian law. Yet he acknowledged at the same time that 'this principle does not infringe the right of the state to protect itself and its people (*Volkstum*) from foreign racial (*artfremd*) influences'.⁹⁷

The example of Algermissen shows how flexible and accommodating the defence against the National Socialist state could be, while the Church had manoeuvred itself into a tiny corner from which it tried to defend itself on solely theological grounds. Neither Algermissen nor his book was a fringe phenomenon. *Christentum und Germanentum* achieved its fifth edition (of at least 10,000 prints each) within a year. Algermissen had worked for the *Volksverein* and was very critical of National Socialism in early 1933. His fear that this movement would eventually destroy the Catholic Church might have moved him to adopt a more conciliatory attitude, especially since he felt that the German bishops were not forthcoming with a significant defence.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Algermissen's suspicion of 'foreign racial influences' can be traced back to his work with the *Volksverein* in defence of Bolshevism and his idea that Bolshevik cruelties had their roots in 'asiatic elements' and the 'cold, subversive character of liberal Jewry'.⁹⁹ *Christentum und*

⁹⁵ Konrad Algermissen: 'Germanentum und Christentum', p. 302. First published in *Theologie und Glaube*, 26 (1934). Later as book: *Germanentum und Christentum*, 5th edn (x 9-10,000), imprimatur Hildesheim, Hanover, 1935. Quoted in Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 181.

⁹⁶ Konrad Gröber on 'Rasse' in Konrad Gröber: *Handbuch der religiösen Gegenwartsfragen*, Freiburg, 1937, p. 536.

⁹⁷ Algermissen: *Germanentum*, p. 319. Quoted in Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 181.

⁹⁸ Letter Konrad Algermissen to Cardinal Bertram, 31.3.1933. StadtAMG, 15/7/1.

⁹⁹ Algermissen on Bolshevism in 1933 as quoted by Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 181.

Germanentum was fairly representative of a Catholic literature that sought to secure a place for the Church within the new state by insisting that Catholicism was not incompatible with Germandom. *Völkisch* language, an accentuated anti-Bolshevism and a divorce from Judaism were part of this defence literature.¹⁰⁰ Hermann Greive went even further. The Catholic defence literature shared, in his view, the common anti-Jewish prejudices whenever they referred to the 'Jewish question', including the racial justifications for this 'problem'.¹⁰¹

There were also more popular forms of educational material where Christian tradition was defended. For example, Cardinal Schulte of Cologne did not rely on the limited effect of pastoral letters and learned books alone. In March 1934 he set up a defence bureau against anti-Christian propaganda (*Abwehrstelle gegen antichristliche Propaganda*) in his diocese, whose management was assigned to *Domvikar* Josef Teusch.¹⁰² Teusch focused on the defence of the Old Testament and the relation between Judaism and Christianity. His work has been seen as an expression of sympathy for the Jews and has been credited as a courageous stand against the racist antisemitism of the regime.¹⁰³

Together with the archdiocese, Josef Teusch created the *Katechismuswahrheiten* (Truths of the Catechism) as a 'guard' against the 'propaganda of unbelief' which he believed had found its followers even among Catholics. The format of the booklet was the question-answer pattern of a catechism, while its terminology reflected that of Rosenberg's *Myth*.¹⁰⁴ The *Katechismuswahrheiten* focused on biblical phrases that had been used by National Socialist propaganda to 'prove' that Christianity was essentially Jewish, for example, '*das Heil kommt aus den Juden*'. The explanation of these phrases and the justification of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism intended to instruct the reader that 'Christianity has never been a Jewish

¹⁰⁰ Defence literature that included *völkisch* antisemitic statements were for example: Bernhard Bartmann: *Der Glaubensgegensatz zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, Paderborn, 1938. P Tharsicius Paffrath, OFM: 'Die alttestamentliche Religion und die semitischen Religionen', in: *Theologische Gegenwartsfragen*, ed. by Erhard Schlund, Regensburg, 1940. Cited in Tal: 'Consecration of Politics', p. 86.

¹⁰¹ Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, p. 194.

¹⁰² Stasiewski: *Bischöfe*, I, p. 611.

¹⁰³ Introduction to EAK file Josef Teusch Werke. Also Recker: *Berning*, p. 250. Hermann Greive briefly comments on the *Katechismuswahrheiten* and remarked that it stressed the Jews' collective guilt in the crucifixion of Christ. Greive: *Theologie und Ideologie*, pp. 200-201.

¹⁰⁴ 'Beibrief zu den Katechismuswahrheiten', 15.9.1936. EAK, Gen 22.13, 4.

religion'.¹⁰⁵ It was a deliberate and intelligent fusion of Rosenberg's racial outlook and Catholic religious dogma: the faithful were called on to recognise Rosenberg's errors in his own terminology, while the choice of the catechism as the overarching framework made clear where the truth was to be found.

As in the learned literature, the *Kathechismuswahrheiten* spoke of two different Jewish peoples, in this case modern Jewry and ancient Jewry. This had the advantage that it did not interfere with the regime's monopoly interest in modern Jewry, while the *Kathechismuswahrheiten* could stress the primacy of religion over race when it declared that ancient Jewry was a religious not a racial community. Yet unlike Faulhaber and Algermissen, the *Kathechismuswahrheiten* did comment on modern Jewry in a negative way:

It should be stressed from the beginning that in our religious education we do not refer to [...] those often *entartete* Jews who today live dispersed all over the world, but to the Jews of the Old Union (*Alten Bundes*) who lived as a unified people in their own state in Palestine until they were expelled from their fatherland by the Romans in 70 AC. Not their race, but their religion is important in our explanation.¹⁰⁶

The publication was also not consistent in their differentiation between an '*entartet*' modern Jewry, and ancient religious Jews. An important argument of the *Kathechismuswahrheiten* against the alleged collusion between the Church and Jewry was the reference to Jewish hostility towards Christians, which – according to the pamphlet – pre-empted any collaboration. The same hostility, according to the *Kathechismuswahrheiten*, could be witnessed in communist Russia:

Where-ever they (Jews) have gained power, they have oppressed Christianity as it happens today in Bolshevik Russia which is ruled by a great majority of godless Jews.¹⁰⁷

The pamphlet conjured up a broad continuity of Jewish hostility, deducing the negative characteristics of modern Jewry from the biblical 'cursed' Jews. As a result, the initial distinction between the two was lost and with it the chance to preserve a positive image of the Jews. Instead, the *Kathechismuswahrheiten* invoked a negative

¹⁰⁵ This phrase was either in bold print or followed by 'memorise'. See copy of *Kathechismuswahrheiten* (KW) in EAK, Gen 22.12 v.1, and pamphlet Josef Teusch: 'Predigten zu den Katechismuswahrheiten'.

¹⁰⁶ 'Christentum und Judentum. "Das Heil kommt aus den Juden"', KW, p. 9. EAK, Gen 22.12 v. 1.

¹⁰⁷ 'Das Christentum ist keine jüdische Religion', KW, p. 13. EAK, Gen 22.12 v. 1.

image of the Jew that had allegedly remained unchanged throughout the centuries, and endorsed the Jewish-Bolshevik slogan of the regime.

Like the *Kathechismuswahrheiten*, the 1938 text *Die Nathanaelfrage*¹⁰⁸ was a response to the anti-Catholic propaganda of the time, answering questions such as whether Christ was an 'Aryan' and antisemite, why the Church baptised Jews and whether the Church was linked to international Jewry. The purpose of the *Nathanaelfrage* was not just to provide religious education, but also to counter antisemitism among Catholics. The diocese hoped the booklet could encourage discussions with Catholics who were prejudiced against Jewry.¹⁰⁹

The booklet upheld the separation of Christianity from Judaism in form and content when it reminded its Catholic readers that both had common historical links but that Christianity did not grow out of Judaism. Furthermore, the *Nathanaelfrage* did not challenge the presumed racial determinants of Jewry. On the contrary, it endorsed these factors in its explanation of why the Church baptised Jews:

Surely, the Church has never claimed that baptism changes the racial characteristics of a human being. The baptised Jew remains a Jew by race (*seiner Rasse nach*). However, the Church knows that every baptised man, may he come from any Volk, will become a new man, God's child, Christ's heir.¹¹⁰

The *Nathanaelfrage* and the bishops ran into similar difficulties in their attempts to explain Christ's Jewish origins. This was often only achieved by taking refuge in race theory or divine intervention. The *Nathanaelfrage*, for instance, maintained that Christ was part of the Jewish people in a legal sense because the Jew Joseph was his father. 'Christ's blood-link with the Jewish people was formed through his birth by the virgin Mary, who was engaged to Joseph. [...] [But] everything that was rotten in the Jewish people's blood has not [...] touched him. [...] A wall was erected in Mary [through the immaculate conception] against the unholy bloodstream of the Jewish

¹⁰⁸ Karl Schwarzmann: *Die Nathanaelfrage unserer Tage*, (n.d). Originally, the Nathanael question was Nathanael's response to Philippus' news that he had met Christ: 'Can anything good come from Palestine?' EAK, Gen II 8.4, 1a.

¹⁰⁹ The *Nathanaelfrage* was widely distributed, handed out after mass, and priests were instructed to use the booklet as guiding line in their religious education and sermons. Letter *Generalvikariat* Cologne to all parishes, 18.6.1938. EAK, Gen II 8.4, 1a.

¹¹⁰ Schwarzmann: *Nathanaelfrage*, p. 24. EAK, Gen II 8.4, 1a. Algermissen also confirmed that baptism did not change racial characteristics. Algermissen: *Germanentum und Christentum*, p. 392.

people.’¹¹¹ Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg also went to some lengths to explain how Christ was linked to the Jewish people. The link, according to Gröber, existed in his mother and before the law, but as he had no worldly father he was essentially of supernatural origin.¹¹²

Unlike many Protestant statements, most Catholic works written in defence of the Old Testament acknowledged the historical Jewish roots of Christianity and Christ’s Jewish origin. The will to counter antisemitism among Catholics with the publication of the *Nathanaelfrage* was also a sign that these publications were not motivated by Jew-hatred per se. This is evident from the responses of the regime and of Catholic National Socialist, who thought the Church defended Jewry in their anti-Rosenberg campaign. Theo G. from Rosrath, for instance, was indignant that salvation should come from the Jews:

Our daily experience, our best teacher, tells us the opposite. The Jew is the leader of Bolshevism, he brings death, horror, desperation, etc. see Spain. [...] Have the Jews not themselves called out: Your blood may come over our children and us! [...] If you (the Church) continue like this [...] everyone who thinks he should stand up for you will say: this is a waste of time. [...] It is truly without value that you should give your support to the Hebrew.¹¹³

The defence against Rosenberg could have been the opportunity to evoke a positive image of the Jews, at least within their own community. Yet instead Catholic religious education perpetuated a negative portrait of modern Jewry where the image was more hostile than it had been in religious publications during the Weimar Republic. The authors could have restricted themselves completely to the religious sphere and emphasised the positive characteristics of the biblical Jews. Instead, they pointed out the fundamental break between the two religions from the moment the Jews had rejected Christ as messiah. The argument usually went on to create the classic dichotomy between the god-fearing Jews (here the Jews of the Old Testament) and modern Jewry. The well-known prejudices associated with the latter were not only left unchallenged, but were strengthened by repetition. The anti-Rosenberg publications even enforced the regime’s stereotype of the ‘Jewish

¹¹¹ Schwarzmann: *Nathanaelfrage*, pp. 5-6, pp. 15-16. EAK, Gen II 8.4, 1a.

¹¹² Gröber’s Lent pastoral letter, 8.2.1939, in: *Anzeigblatt für die Erzdiözese Freiburg*, February 1939.

¹¹³ Theo Gunnemann, Rosrath, 2.12.1936 to *Generalvikariat* Cologne. For responses to the *Katechismuswahrheiten* see EAK, Gen 22.13, 4.

Bolshevik' and accepted the finality of racial characteristics. National Socialist race theory was no longer rejected out of hand (criticism was reserved for 'race religion') as the Church had done since the late 1920s; it was now taken as a given category including the racial image of the Jews. It is debatable whether these writings were able to counter antisemitism or foster solidarity with German Jews. They were more likely to increase the spiritual ghettoisation of German Jewry, a situation that reflected their growing political and physical ghettoisation.

Nothing of the increasingly desperate situation of German Jews was sympathetically reflected in the defence literature. The publications pointed instead to their own responsibility for their fate, when for instance the *Katechismuswahrheiten* dwelled on the consequences of the crucifixion of Christ:

'Days will come when your enemies will build a wall around you, encircle you, harass you. They will crush you and the children you are bearing and they will leave no stone intact, because you have not foreseen the time of your affliction.' (Lk, 19, 42-44) This prophecy has been literally fulfilled. Result: With the rejection of the saviour it [Israel] is burdened with an unredeemable guilt and has sealed its fate.¹¹⁴

4.2 England. Reactions to Hitler's Germany

Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor hardly created huge headlines in Catholic Britain. It was yet another new government of a German republic that had been struggling with the effects of a deep economic crisis since 1929. Only the April boycott of Jewish shops in Germany brought the first indignant protests. The Leeds Labour Party expressed its 'abhorrence at [...] the persecution of Jews, Socialists and Communists.'¹¹⁵ Even Belloc and G.K. Chesterton joined the voices of protest, albeit with an ambiguous twist. In a booklet published in 1933 Chesterton wrote:

To-day, although I still think there is a Jewish problem, and that what I understand by the expression 'the Jewish spirit' is a spirit foreign in Western countries, I am appalled by the Hitlerite atrocities in Germany. I am quite ready to believe now that Belloc and

¹¹⁴ *Katechismuswahrheiten*, p. 12. EAK, Gen 22.12, 1. Olaf Blaschke pointed to the significance of the crucifixion allegation during the times of persecution. The age old accusation and god's curse of the Jewish people turned out to be a justification and explanation for the persecution during the Third Reich in the eyes of many devout Catholics. Blaschke: *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus*, pp. 60-61.

¹¹⁵ City of Leeds Labour Minutes, West Yorkshire Archive, LP 4/10.

myself will die defending the last Jew in Europe. Thus does history play ironical jokes upon us.¹¹⁶

There was, however, no joint statement by the English hierarchy on the Jewish persecution in Germany – in contrast to their immediate response to Russian and Spanish communism.¹¹⁷

The head of the hierarchy, Cardinal Bourne, showed no inclination to address the matter publicly. Asked by Lord Denbigh if he would attend a protest meeting in support of German Jews, Cardinal Bourne declined and let Lord Denbigh know that he did not wish Catholics to participate in these protests:

the German bishops are able and competent to act in the matter if they judge it opportune to do so and he [Cardinal Bourne] knows that English interference in the internal affairs of foreign countries is resented by Catholics of those countries. [Additionally], as long as he is aware, the Jews have not at any time raised any protest against the persecution of Catholics which has so recently taken place in Russia, Mexico, Spain.¹¹⁸

The Anglican Reverend James Parkes (1896-1981) had no illusions that an official condemnation of National Socialism could be expected from the Roman Catholic Church, now that the Church in Germany had made her peace with National Socialism. Supported by the then Anglican Bishop of Manchester, William Temple, Parkes had studied Christian-Jewish relations since the 1920s and eventually dedicated most of his time to the research of antisemitism and the possibilities to overcome this hostility.¹¹⁹ Parkes had more faith in the leadership of the Anglican Church and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang. He consequently approached Lang and urged him to publicise his disapproval of the German government. But Lang likewise was hesitant and preferred to use informal diplomatic channels to voice his concern, not the public stage.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ *The Voice of Britain. Churchmen, Statesmen, Publicists, Doctors, Scientists, Sportsmen on Hitlerism*, London, 1933. Besides Belloc and Chesterton, the booklet contained statements by the Anglican Bishops Lang, Temple, Bell, Methodist churchmen, and Archbishop Downey of Liverpool.

¹¹⁷ On Westminster's responses to National Socialism see Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 222. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 215.

¹¹⁸ Private Secretary to Lord Denbigh, 31.3.1933. AAW, Hi 2/125. Cardinal Hinsley's letter to Cardinal Faulhaber, 19.10.1937. AAW, Hi 2 / 84, 1937-40. Hinsley expressed his concern about the anti-clerical policies of the National Socialist regime, but assured Faulhaber that the English hierarchy had no intention to interfere in party politics, neither national nor international.

¹¹⁹ For a brief summary of Parkes's life and work see Kushner: 'James Parkes', pp. 451-61.

¹²⁰ Letter Parkes to Lang, 9.6.1933. LL, Lang, vol. 38, 18/19.

The initiative remained with single Catholic bishops. Archbishop Downey of Liverpool spoke on numerous occasions against Hitler's regime and the persecution of the Jews. He condemned the latter at a protest meeting in Liverpool Central Hall in spring 1933 on the basis of:

broad religious principles which transcend all differences, we must protest against this persecution; this persecution of an ancient race which, through all its vicissitudes, amidst the welter of polytheism, kept intact the worship of one true God, and preserved monotheism upon the earth.¹²¹

The Catholic Bishops Henshaw of Salford and McNulty of Nottingham, likewise, joined protest meetings in their diocese against the persecution of Jews in 1933.¹²² Against the silence of the Vatican and the German bishops, it was again Archbishop Downey who vehemently condemned the pogrom of *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 as a crime against humanity. He expressed his obligation to protest against such policies that threatened the heritage of civilisation.¹²³ Later in 1943, Bishop Marshall of Salford accepted the invitation to be a patron of the 'Manchester and Salford League to Combat Anti-Semitism'.¹²⁴

Other members of the hierarchy were too concerned about the impending communist wave hanging over Europe to recognise the criminal activities of Hitler's Germany.¹²⁵ At a protest meeting against the Jewish persecution in Germany, Archbishop Williams of Birmingham denounced antisemitism as 'contrary to the

¹²¹ Downey spoke to the Liverpool University Jewish Society on 19 March 1933, followed by other addresses in front of Jewish societies and a meeting with Chief Rabbi Hertz; again against National Socialist Jewish persecution at the Anglo-Palestinian dinner at the Mayfair Hotel in London, 21.10.1935. Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 214.

¹²² See, e.g., at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, April 1933. Cited in *ibidem*, p. 215. For a detailed account on public denunciations of Jewish persecution by the Christian Churches see Richard Gutteridge: 'Some Christian Responses in Britain to the Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945', in: *Remembering for the Future: Jews and Christians During and After the Holocaust*, ed. by Yehuda Bauer, et al., Oxford, 1989, pp. 352-62.

¹²³ Richard Gutteridge: 'The Churches and the Jews in England, 1933-1945', in: *Judaism and Christianity*, pp. 353-72, (p. 365). Other European bishops likewise condemned *Kristallnacht*, e.g., the Cardinals Schuster in Milan, Van Roey of Belgium, Verdier of Paris, and the Patriarch of Lisbon. Phayer: *Catholic Church*, p. 4.

¹²⁴ Letter Marshall to Marcus Shloimovitz, 15.5.43. SDA, 204/344. The Manchester and Salford League to Combat Anti-Semitism was formerly named League of Jewish Defence. Marshall was not patron for long. He was soon told by the Council of Manchester and Salford Jews that the League had not been given sanction by the Council, which is the representative organisation of the Jewish community. Marshall resigned from the League.

¹²⁵ This was starkly represented in pastoral letters, the majority of which warned solely against communism throughout the 1930s. This ended with the outbreak of war when the bishops condemned the exaggerated German nationalism and the threat to the German Churches. Catholic Central Library, Pastoral boxes.

spirit and principles of the Christian faith', but if it were true that the Jews were communists as the Nazis claimed, then his sympathies were with the Nazis, though their methods were not wise.¹²⁶

The prevailing 'red-scare' with its concomitant antisemitism was not conducive to creating an atmosphere of compassion for the victims of fascism and National Socialism. The Catholic papers discussed fascism sympathetically and local Catholic newspapers looked favourably upon National Socialist arguments.¹²⁷ Anti-clericalism in republican Spain and later the Spanish Civil War diverted the attention of the Catholic hierarchy further by focusing on Catholic anti-socialism. Archbishop Amigo of Southwark, for instance, declined – like Cardinal Bourne – to participate in protest meetings because he felt that the Jews had failed to show any solidarity with Catholics whenever they were persecuted.¹²⁸ As demonstrated in Chapter Three, Amigo's mind and heart were with the nationalists in Spain at the time. Like Amigo, the majority of Catholic lay organisations in England were reluctant to participate in pro-Jewish protest meetings and concentrated instead on the communist threat. Barely a handful of lay organisations – the CSG, Young Christian Workers (YCW), and the Catholic Council for International Relations (CCIR) committed themselves to fight both communism and fascism.¹²⁹

Arthur Hinsley, Bourne's successor to the Westminster archbishopric, took more interest in international affairs than his predecessor. The Cardinal publicly condemned National Socialist infringements on German Catholic youth organisations in August 1937 in a letter to *The Times*, for which he was promptly

¹²⁶ Williams at an inter-church meeting in Birmingham in May 1933, printed in *The Universe*, 20.5.1933. Cited in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 215.

¹²⁷ LMA, Board of Deputies of British Jews, BO4.

¹²⁸ Cited in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 215. Amigo's 1939 Advent Pastoral: 'We cannot but deplore that while our newspapers make much of Germany's wanton aggression against Poland, little is said about the outrages which have accompanied and accompany Russian occupation of Eastern Poland. We feel it is our duty [...] to protest strenuously against the bloodthirsty sacrileges committed by the Bolsheviks. There is the terrible danger that Bolshevism may sweep civilisation before it, and what it failed to achieve in Spain may be successfully carried out in Germany itself and in other lands.' Catholic Central Library, Pastoral box.

¹²⁹ On YCW and CSG see Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 204. The CCIR had sent a concerned letter through Hinsley to Cardinal Pacelli about the Italian offensive against Ethiopia and the Pope's silence. Letter CCIR to Cardinal Secretary of State, signed by Edward Myers, VLP Fowke, 22.9.1935. AAW, Hi 2 / 26 CCIR 1930-39.

reprimanded by the German Charge d’Affaires of the German embassy.¹³⁰ Hinsley’s public and very explicit criticism of German church policy on a non-ecclesiastical platform was the exception rather than the rule. In the following years, Cardinal Hinsley avoided commenting on the situation of the Church in Germany in this manner. When he spoke of Catholic persecution he was referring to Catholics in republican Spain, Mexico or Soviet Russia – but not in Germany. Yet Hinsley was well aware of the beleaguered situation of the German Church in the late 1930s. He was in contact with Cardinal Bertram and Faulhaber, and expressed his concern for the safety of the Church in Germany in his letters to the German hierarchy.¹³¹ It seemed as if the acquiescence of the Catholic Church in Germany extended across the Channel. Like the French bishops, the English Catholic hierarchy decided in 1937 not to criticise the persecution of the Church in Germany in public so as not to provoke further reprisals by the regime:

The statements of Germany’s political leadership have made it entirely clear that Christianity as such is considered to be an obstacle to the reconstruction of Germany and that they anticipate to get rid of it in one way or another. You have therefore warned your flock of further and more serious persecution. [...] We do not intend to nor do we have the desire to intrude upon the field of party politics, be it national or international.¹³²

In May 1938 Hinsley refused episcopal support for a public conference on the persecution of the Christian churches for similar reasons. In his response to Hugh Cecil and Lord Noel-Buxton, he stressed that such a conference would expose the Catholic Church to the charge of undue political activity and would not help the Church’s negotiations with totalitarian states.¹³³ Similarly, there was no public denunciation of National Socialist antisemitism by Cardinal Hinsley until late in 1938. Until then Hinsley, like Bourne and Amigo, turned down requests for support

¹³⁰ See, e.g., Hinsley’s sermon at St Edward the Confessor, Golders Green, 13.10.1935. AAW, Hi 2 / 177. Hinsley disapproved of the suppression of the Catholic *Bündische* Youth Movement in Germany. Wörmann, German Charge d’Affaires, Deutsche Botschaft lectured Hinsley, that the movement was not on trial for its contacts to young people in other countries, but for its communist character. Letter Wörmann to Hinsley, 24.8.1937. AAW, Hi 2 / 84.

¹³¹ Letter Hinsley to Bertram, 13.12.1935. Stasiewski: *Bischöfe*, III, 164. Also Hinsley to Faulhaber and the German episcopate, 19.10.1937. AAW, Hi 2 / 84. Also in Volk: *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, II, 414-16.

¹³² Letter Hinsley to Cardinal Faulhaber, 19.10.1937. AAW, Hi 2 / 84. For the decision of the French bishops to refrain from public statements see letter Pacelli to Faulhaber, 15.11.1937. Volk: *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, II, 416-17.

¹³³ Letter Hugh Cecil to Hinsley, 10.5.1938; and Hinsley’s response in his letter, 12.5.1938. AAW, Hi 2 / 84.

on the grounds that Catholics were still waiting for a condemnation of the ongoing Catholic persecution by Jewish authorities.¹³⁴

From spring 1938 onwards, Hinsley abandoned his non-interference strategy. Both Vatican and national policies were partly responsible for this activism. The refugee movement, in particular, provided an impetus to act for Cardinal Hinsley. In a letter to Fr O'Hea of the Catholic Social Guild, the Cardinal referred to the pope's increasing concern over the condition of Catholics in Germany. Hinsley felt that Catholics in England should contribute to the care for German refugees in England.¹³⁵ *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 without doubt strengthened the determination of the Christian churches in Britain not to remain silent 'in the face of the excesses of hatred'.¹³⁶ The Cardinal eventually publicly condemned both communism, and fascism and National Socialism in a speech in Birmingham in December 1938. He also committed himself to several ecumenical projects in protest against Hitler's Germany, which involved co-operation with Jewish groups. One of the biggest events Hinsley attended in person was the protest meeting against antisemitism and the persecution of the Jews at Royal Albert Hall in December 1938.¹³⁷ Hinsley believed that an English Roman Catholic should be patriotic and free of fascist leanings, a belief that was reflected in his speech at Royal Albert Hall that was vigorous and uncompromising in its condemnation of all oppression.¹³⁸ From the beginning of the war Hinsley's sermons and proclamations against fascism and National Socialism grew more passionate. He spoke out against the dangers for Christianity and against racial hubris.¹³⁹ His efforts earned him Winston Churchill's

¹³⁴ Cardinal Hinsley's response, 22.2.1938, to the request of Agudas Israel World Organisation, H A Goodman, to join the protest against the persecution of Jews in Romania. Other pleas included United Appeal for Jews in Poland and Other Parts of Eastern Europe, The Friendly Discussion Circle for Jews & Christians, The British Committee of the World Congress against Anti-Semitism and Racism. AAW, Hi 2 / 125. Jewish aid groups received numerous such replies from Catholics not just in England, but from the United States or Belgium, who felt that the Jews were responsible for Catholic persecution in Mexico and Spain. BOD secretary to Morris Waldmann, American Jewish Committee, 27.4.1934. Jewish organisations soon saw themselves obliged to raise sharp protests against the public oppression of religious institutions in order to expect sympathies from Christians and Catholics. Circular letter of Jewish Central Information Office, Amsterdam, 23.3.1936. All in LMA, BO4 CAR 16.

¹³⁵ Hinsley to O'Hea, 26.2.1938. CSG, E9 Cardinal Hinsley 1929-41.

¹³⁶ Gutteridge: 'Some Christian Responses', p. 355.

¹³⁷ A similar demonstration was organised by the BOD again in October 1942 with Bishop Mathew as Catholic representative. Letter by S. Brodetsky, president of BOD, to Downey, 9.10.1942. AAL, Downey Collection Series 1 X, Diocesan Administration. Problems & Complaints, Jews 44/1.

¹³⁸ Gutteridge: 'Some Christian Responses', p. 356.

¹³⁹ For Hinsley's war-time sermons, speeches or articles see, e.g., his letter to *The Times* in 21.5.1940. AAW, Bo 1 / 159 Hinsley Speeches. NCWC News service, George Barnard, London correspondent.

praise, when the latter claimed that he was one of only two men Churchill could trust to 'speak to the nation on the aims of this country at war'.¹⁴⁰

Hinsley's commitment provoked a burst of protest activities. Apart from public meetings, there were radio talks and letters published in *The Times* and other newspapers in protest against racism and discrimination. It is remarkable that all these efforts were inter-denominational, including Jewish, Protestant and Catholic representatives.¹⁴¹ Cooperation between the Christian denominations and certainly between Catholic and Jewish representatives had so far been very scarce. In 1940 Hinsley also strongly supported the inter-denominational organisation against racism and fascism – the Sword of the Spirit (SoS) – and a Catholic aid organisation for 'non-Aryan' Catholic refugees, which is discussed further below.¹⁴²

Of symbolic importance among Hinsley's ecumenical work was his support of the Council of Christians and Jews that was founded in March 1942 by Rev James Parkes and his close ally William Simpson, secretary of the Christian Council for Refugees, with the support of the Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York. The Council was devoted to fighting antisemitism and all forms of religious and racial persecution, and aimed to improve Christian-Jewish relations.¹⁴³ Cardinal

Or in his speech to explain the aims of the Sword of the Spirit movement: 'The Massacre of the Innocents.' Both in AAW, Hi 2 / 177.

¹⁴⁰ The other man Churchill thought of was himself. Quote in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 197. Goebbels' propaganda ministry also noticed Hinsley's patriotic support for the British government and used the Cardinal's example to remind the German bishops of their patriotic duty to Germany. Report by August Klinksi, Benedictine priest, on a meeting at the Ministry for Propaganda, 12.9.1940, to which representatives of the Catholic Church were summoned to. Goebbels apparently followed the meeting from a distance. Stasiewski: *Bischöfe*, V: 1940-42 (1983), pp. 184-86.

¹⁴¹ An example of such an ecumenical declaration against racism was the letter published in *The Times* on 21.12.1940. It was later agreed to make the script known throughout the world in order to encourage the churches in the occupied countries in their resistance against the National Socialist Germany. It was also hoped for them to be able to respond and agree to those principles in public, which 'might be of considerable importance'. LL, Lang vol. 84 3b/19, 252. It seemed, however, that such boundless efforts had their limits. In the case of Cardinal Hinsley in the perceived disloyalty to the British prime minister. A follow-up letter for Christmas 1941 remained unpublished as Hinsley refused to sign the drafted letter because he saw therein a criticism of the Prime Minister and his war efforts. Report by William Temple to Cosmo Lang, 21.11.1941. LL, Lang vol. 84. Although this letter failed to be published on the national level, a similar statement was drawn up in Liverpool on the initiative of the Anglican Bishop and was finally published in the *Liverpool Post*, 16.4.1941. Letter O'Hea to Msgr Adamson, 4.6.1941. AAL, Peace 71/1.

¹⁴² On the Sword of the Spirit see Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 234-55. Stuart Mews: 'The Sword of the Spirit: A Catholic Cultural Crusade of 1940', in: *The Church and War*, ed. by William J. Sheils, Diana Wood, Studies in Church History, XX, Oxford, 1983, pp. 409-31.

¹⁴³ Other leading Catholic members of the Council included the Conservative MP Sir Patrick Hannon, Sir Desmond Morton, Lord Perth, Frank Pakenham, Michael Derrick as assistant editor of *The Tablet*, the Jesuits Frs John Murray and Maurice Bevenot, Thomas Fitzgerald, priest in Stepney. Aspden:

Hinsley and the Archbishop of Canterbury were joint presidents of the Council. The Roman Catholic representative in the Executive Committee was ACF Beales of the Sword of the Spirit, and Bishop Mathew represented Cardinal Hinsley in case the Cardinal could not attend the meetings.¹⁴⁴ Bishop Mathew was one of the few bishops, together with Archbishop Downey, who tried to establish a respectful and workable relationship between the Catholic and Jewish community with the explicit support of Cardinal Hinsley.¹⁴⁵

4.2.1 *English Catholics and 'non-Aryan' Refugees*

The following pages discuss the efforts of the English Catholic community to assist 'non-Aryan' Catholic refugees. Its centrepiece is the history, work and reception of the Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany and Austria (CCRGA). Two issues are important for the themes raised by this chapter: the motivation and justification for this enterprise and the reception it met from the bishops and the public. Hinsley's aid organisation eventually received only very little support from the Catholic public. The Cardinal could not have found a less favourable time to launch a Catholic aid programme than in 1938. At that time Catholic newspapers were publishing more antisemitic articles than they had ever done before in the interwar period. The Spanish Civil War had reached a crucial stage and occupied the minds of Catholic intellectuals and bishops. The time was not conducive for a charity that depended on public sympathy towards people who were persecuted for their Jewish race. The situation of 'non-Aryan' refugees tested the often-expressed tolerance towards Jews by the bishops and the Catholic community. To what extent this charity-fatigue was the result of anti-Jewish sentiments is discussed below.

Forced emigration was the National Socialist 'solution' to their 'Jewish question' until it was prohibited by the regime in October 1941 and replaced by the deportation of European Jewry. As Hitler was not to be persuaded to abandon his policy of

Fortress Church, p. 245, p. 269. For a history of the Council see Marcus Braybrooke: *Children of One God: A History of the Council of Christians and Jews*, London, 1991.

¹⁴⁴ CCJ Executive Committee Minutes, First Meeting, 20.3.1942. Parkes Library, Southampton, Parkes Papers, MS65 2 / 1.

¹⁴⁵ On David Mathew's involvement in Catholic-Jewish co-operations see Aspden: *Fortress Church*, pp. 235-36, p. 242.

forced emigration, the international community reluctantly became involved in coping with the consequences of Germany's antisemitism as they tried to accommodate Jewish refugees throughout the world. The economic recession and an anti-immigration, if not antisemitic, attitude in many countries influenced immigration policies of the respective governments to the effect that they welcomed fewer and fewer refugees. Most of the international conferences called to discuss the refugee problem consequently ended without firm commitments.¹⁴⁶

The numbers of immigrants arriving in Britain from Germany and Austria rose constantly over the years from 1933 and was at its highest shortly before the outbreak of war in 1939. By then an estimated 360,000 Jews had left Germany and Austria, about 60,000 to 70,000 of whom were admitted to Great Britain.¹⁴⁷ Britain had continuously tightened its immigration laws in succeeding Aliens Acts since the turn of the century.¹⁴⁸ Bernard Wasserstein asserts that there was a considerable degree of public sympathy in Britain for the persecuted Jews. This sentiment was, however, carried by a definite undercurrent of antagonism within the British administration and public opinion.¹⁴⁹ Tony Kushner, quotes a 1940 survey where nearly half of the people questioned believed that the Jews were an oppressed people, but only 18% of these thought they deserved sympathy.¹⁵⁰ A concern about higher levels of unemployment and the costs of a more generous immigration policy were widely voiced. The popular press fuelled this antagonism with stories about allegedly rampant Jewish profiteering and black marketeering.¹⁵¹ According to Kushner, this negative public opinion changed in 1942-43 to a more generous attitude towards the persecuted Jews. A Mass Observation poll from February 1943 recorded that 78% of the sample approved of the government assisting any Jews who

¹⁴⁶ Francis Nicosia: *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question*, Austin, 1985, pp. 157-58.

¹⁴⁷ Wasserstein: *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 6.

¹⁴⁸ The Alien Act 1905 was itself drafted with the purpose to regulate the immigration of Eastern European and Russian Jews. Even though, neither the wording of Alien Act was antisemitic, nor was it only enforced against Jews, the anti-Jewish motif in its drafting remains. David Feldman: 'The Importance of Being English. Jewish Immigration and the Decay of Liberal England', in: *Metropolis London. Histories*, ed. by David Feldman, Gareth Jones, London, 1989, pp. 56-85.

¹⁴⁹ Wasserstein: *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.10-33.

¹⁵⁰ Kushner: 'Ambivalence', p. 181.

¹⁵¹ See, e.g., *Evening Standard*, 8.7.1938; *The Times*, 25.8.1939. Kushner sees a clear antisemitic undercurrent underneath this opposition. According to Mass Observation surveys, the negative feelings towards Jews were only replaced by a feeling of shame and greater ambivalence by 1943. Kushner: *Persistence of Prejudice*, pp. 88-89, p. 98.

could get away from National Socialist persecution, yet fewer than 10% thought that these refugees should be allowed to stay indefinitely.¹⁵²

The formalities immigrants had to comply with reflected the early public concern over immigration. To be able to stay in Britain in the 1930s, an immigrant had to provide a letter of reference by a guarantor, proof of possible employment in Britain and have his/her 'entry-money' ready. Today, historians agree that Britain's pre-war immigration policy was relatively generous towards Jewish refugees compared to other countries. The verdict for the war period and immediate post-war years has been far less flattering.¹⁵³ Bernard Wasserstein finds little to commend apart from a 'few flashes of humanity by individuals'.¹⁵⁴ Britain had severely restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine since the Arab-Palestinian revolt in 1937 and more so since the 1939 White Paper on Jewish immigration to Palestine. The purpose of this policy was to pacify a region that was of strategic importance to the trade routes and the defence of the British Empire. The British governments did not retreat from the White Paper during the war, even though they were witnessing a refugee crisis quite different from any other before. And it was not just Palestine where Jewish refugees were not welcome. Likewise, admission of Jewish refugees from German-occupied Europe to Britain was very restricted as was their settlement within the colonial empire. The admission of only 1-2,000 Jewish refugees per year to Britain compares rather unfavourably to the 300,000 Dutch and Belgian refugees (both Jewish and non-Jewish) admitted in early 1940.¹⁵⁵ On top of a very restrictive immigration policy, the principle of total warfare against the Axis power at the same time prevented any large-scale relief sent to Jews in occupied Europe.¹⁵⁶

Against the background of a restrictive immigration policy, the burden of caring for refugees was to a large extent carried by voluntary organisations. Pamela Shatzkes mentions that the generous welcome of German Jewish refugees before the outbreak of the war was only possible because representative leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community had promised that the expenses for these refugees would be paid for by

¹⁵² Kushner: 'Ambivalence', p. 181.

¹⁵³ Wasserstein: *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, London, 1999. Pamela Shatzkes: *Holocaust and Rescue. Impotent or Indifferent? Anglo-Jewry 1938-1945*, Basingstoke, 2002.

¹⁵⁴ Wasserstein: *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 311.

¹⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 319, p. 35.

¹⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 318.

the Jewish community.¹⁵⁷ In autumn 1939 the British government eventually granted funds to private relief organisations to cover for their administrative expenses.¹⁵⁸ Numerous Jewish and Christian organisations were already working hard to accommodate the increasing numbers of refugees by the time the CCRGA was founded.¹⁵⁹ By 1936, the two largest and most effective Jewish aid organisations in Britain were the Jewish Refugee Committee founded by Otto Schiff in 1933 and the Council for German Jewry.¹⁶⁰ Among the non-Jewish aid organisations historians have noted the dedicated work of the Academic Assistance Council for refugee scholars (founded by Sir William Beveridge, then Director of the London School of Economics), the Christian Council for Refugees (founded by the Methodist minister Henry Carter) and above all the relief work of the English Quakers through their German Emergency Committee (GEC).¹⁶¹ The GEC was founded in April 1933 by the Executive Committee of the Society of Friends in response to the boycott of Jewish businesses in Germany. The assistance it offered was principally open to everyone, though it was felt that most aid should go to baptised Jews and political refugees. There was little awareness in Britain of the situation of baptised Jews, as

¹⁵⁷ Between 1933 and 1939 the Anglo-Jewish community raised £3 million for the aid of these refugees. Shatzkes on the achievements (and failures) of Anglo-Jewry with respect to governmental immigration policy. Shatzkes: *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 5, p. 26. Also Wasserstein: *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁸ Shatzkes mentions that governmental support was only coming forward after the relief organisations threatened that refugees would otherwise have to fall back onto the National Assistance Board. The Central Committee for Refugees was the newly founded organisation to administer these funds. Gerhard Hirschfeld: '“A High Tradition of Eagerness...” British Non-Jewish Organisations in Support of Refugees', in: *Second Chance. Two Centuries of German Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, ed. by Werner Mosse, Tübingen, 1991, pp. 500-611, (p. 608). Shatzkes: *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 232.

¹⁵⁹ Gerhard Hirschfeld suggests that one needed a whole dictionary to do justice to all British institutions that provided relief work for German-speaking Jewish refugees. Hirschfeld: 'British Non-Jewish Organisations', p. 600.

¹⁶⁰ Otto Schiff's organisation worked closely together with the British administration and focused less on public appeals. The Council for German Jewry (founded in 1936) represented the relief efforts of the American, British and other Jewish communities. It incorporated the Central British Fund for German Jewry that had managed to raise £250,000 in 1933 alone. The Council for German Jewry hoped to fund the settlement of young adults in Palestine. For an overview of Jewish organisations see Shatzkes: *Holocaust and Rescue*, pp. 25-45. Ronald Stent: 'Jewish Relief Organisations', in: *Second Chance*, pp. 579-99.

¹⁶¹ By 1939 the non-denominational organisation Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, or *Kindertransport*, had managed to bring 10,000 children to Britain, 90% of which were Jewish. Wasserstein: *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 9. For the work of the Academic Assistance Council and German Emergency Committee see Hirschfeld: 'British Non-Jewish Organisations', pp. 500-611. On the Christian churches in Britain see Gutteridge: 'The Churches and the Jews in England', pp. 353-72. Andrew Chandler: 'A Question of Fundamental Principles. The Church of England and the Jews of Germany 1933-1937', *LBIYB*, 38 (1993), 221-61. For the Quaker relief work in general see Lawrence Darton: *An Account of the work of the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens. First Known as the German Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends, 1933-50*, London, 1954.

refugee work was largely conceived of in purely Jewish terms. As a result, Jewish converts tended to fall through the nets of the existing aid organisations.¹⁶² The GEC was among the largest and most active Christian relief organisations. In Britain, the GEC negotiated with the Ministry of Labour and Home Office for work permits for refugees, but it also had case-workers in Germany, co-operated in the rescue of Jewish children in the *Kindertransport* project, and tirelessly campaigned in numerous appeals for public attention to refugee relief work. By the end of the war, the GEC had dealt with 22,000 families and individuals who had asked for help.¹⁶³

4.2.1.1 *Early Catholic Relief. The CCIR and CGI*

Catholic aid to German refugees was subject to and limited by Westminster's non-interference policy. The first initiative to assist German refugees came therefore from two lay organisations, rather than from the Catholic hierarchy itself.¹⁶⁴ A well organised but short-lived attempt to take care of German refugees was undertaken by the Catholic Council for International Relations (CCIR). The Council had to close their doors again in April 1936 due to lack of funds. The ultimate cause for this premature end, however, was Hinsley's cautious policy. With an eye on the difficult situation of the Church in Germany at the time, Hinsley admonished the CCIR 'not to appeal publicly for funds'. Such an appeal could be interpreted as Catholic criticism of the National Socialist regime for which the German Church would eventually be held accountable.¹⁶⁵

Apart from the CCIR, the Catholic Guild for Israel (CGI) was also actively supporting refugees from early on. The Guild had persuaded religious orders to offer 'non-Aryan' Catholic refugees temporary shelter and hospitality in their hostels. A Jewish Catholic Refugee Fund was set up, which was fed by regular fundraising campaigns.¹⁶⁶ The CGI and CCIR pooled their resources in November 1935, but were not able to prevent the closure of their aid organisation five months later.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Gutteridge: 'Some Christian Responses', p. 355.

¹⁶³ Hirschfeld: 'British Non-Jewish Organisations', pp. 606-608.

¹⁶⁴ Help was sometimes offered to individuals. See correspondence Collings to Dr Jungmann 16.2.1938. AAW, Hi 2 / 84. Others wrote to a priest they once knew in England and ask for their support. See, e.g., Eric Peri to Fr Lopez, 7.4.1936. BAA, Fr Lopez Foreign Letter – Refugees.

¹⁶⁵ Minutes of the CCIR, 23.5.1937. AAW, Hi 2 / 84.

¹⁶⁶ Magazine, Spring 1935. CGI, Miscellaneous Box.

¹⁶⁷ Minutes Annual Meeting, 5.11.35. CGI, Minute Book, III (1933-39).

4.2.1.2 *The Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany and Austria*

In early 1938, Cardinal Hinsley relaxed his non-intervention policy to allow Catholic relief work for 'non-Aryan' Christian refugees from Germany and Austria. He envisaged a centralised, efficient Catholic aid organisation and in February 1938 consulted his fellow bishops on the ways and means to achieve this.¹⁶⁸ It was one of his first endeavours in his efforts to face up to Hitler's Germany and its racism, and predates his co-operation with Jewish institutions. Hinsley explained his motive in breaking with his neutral position on Germany to Fr O'Hea of the Catholic Social Guild in February 1938:

The condition of our fellow Catholics in Germany has been for a long time a matter of concern to the Holy Father and the reasons for his concern have increased in the last few months. [...] [I also] feel that here in England the burden must not be carried alone by our non-Catholic brethren.¹⁶⁹

The newly inaugurated CCRGA held its first meeting on 22 March 1938. Fr O'Hea had followed the invitation of Cardinal Hinsley to take part in this new Catholic relief organisation. Together with John Eppstein and Bishop Mathew (the latter two became members of the executive committee) Hinsley had chosen open and liberal-minded Catholics for the Catholic Committee. O'Hea and Bishop Mathew also represented the Cardinal on the Christian Organisations Committee of the League of Nations, and Eppstein had been a member of the League of Nations Executive and private secretary of Lord Robert Cecil.¹⁷⁰ All members of the hierarchy had accepted the vice-presidency of the Committee, while Hinsley became its president.¹⁷¹ The bishops together with prominent laymen, such as Viscount Fitzalan or Lord Rankeillour, lent their names and efforts to the fundraising campaigns of the Committee.¹⁷² Rev Joseph Geraerts, as chairman of the executive committee,

¹⁶⁸ Circular letter Hinsley to his bishops, 24.2.1938. AAW, Hi 2 / 84.

¹⁶⁹ Hinsley to O'Hea, 26.2.1938. CSG, E9 Cardinal Hinsley 1929-41.

¹⁷⁰ On John Eppstein see Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 207.

¹⁷¹ The prominent laymen Viscount Fitzalan and Lord Tyrell were its chairmen. Rev Joseph Geraerts was chairman of the executive committee, with the Earl of Iddesleigh as vice-chairman. The executive committee consisted of inter alia Bishop Mathew, Lord Rankeillour, Sir Martin Melvin, Mr Grant Ferris, MP, and Douglas Woodruff, the editor of *The Tablet*. Minutes Meeting Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany, 22.3.1938. AAW, Hi 2 / 84.

¹⁷² See, e.g., Hinsley's circular letter, 2.9.1938, where he urged every parish to contribute generously to the funds of the Committee. Ibidem.

oversaw the distribution of aid and reported back to Cardinal Hinsley on the successes and shortcomings of the Committee's relief work. Fr Edward Quinn, secretary of the Committee, also assisted the refugees on the ground in their spiritual and material needs.¹⁷³ By December 1938 the Committee had received 1,425 applications for assistance, mostly from Austrian 'non-Aryan' Catholics, or Catholics married to Jews. The forms of assistance the CCRGA decided to offer included advice on conditions of admission to Great Britain, finding employment and schooling for the children, and providing small subsistence grants. Since the Committee only had a 'trivial amount of money' at their disposal, the actual aid work was essentially provided by volunteers of various Catholic lay organisations.¹⁷⁴ The CCIR, for example, took care of administrative matters and schooling for the children. St Mary's Convent in Ascot circulated letters and literature on the refugee situation and the Society of St Vincent de Paul raised money and goods for 'non-Aryan' Catholic refugees.¹⁷⁵

It became very clear in 1938 that German antisemitic legislation had led to a systematic persecution and subsequently growing wave of emigration that surpassed previous periods of Jewish persecution. After the *Anschluss* of Austria in March 1938, the thorough and tireless work of Adolf Eichmann, who was in charge of the Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna since August, forced approximately 150,000 Jews to leave Austria in less than eighteen months.¹⁷⁶ *Kristallnacht* in November swelled the numbers of Jewish emigrants even further. At the same time, the international community proved to be very reluctant in admitting more refugees to their shores.¹⁷⁷ As a result of German forced emigration and the meagre governmental aid granted to refugees, the funds of private relief organisations in Britain were painfully stretched. It was inevitable that they needed to co-ordinate their efforts to raise more money in public appeals and to increase their bargaining weight in negotiations for governmental support. Jewish relief work was co-ordinated in the Council for German Jewry since 1936, the GEC pooled its efforts in the Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe in October

¹⁷³ Minutes Meeting Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany, 22.3.1938. Ibidem.

¹⁷⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁷⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁷⁶ Wistrich: *Who's Who*, p. 50.

¹⁷⁷ On the Evian Conference in July 1938 and the Bermuda Conference in 1943 see Wasserstein: *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp. 7-8.

1938, and by February 1939 the principal refugee organisations in London – apart from the CCRGA – established their headquarters in Bloomsbury House. The former Palace Hotel in Bloomsbury Street became the nerve centre for negotiations with the government, for the general administration of refugee case-work, and for the organisation of fundraising and public appeals.¹⁷⁸ The latter was also combined in the Lord Baldwin Fund, launched by the former prime minister in December 1938. It managed to raise £523,000 by July 1939.¹⁷⁹

Earlier in August 1938 Geraerts and Eppstein of the CCRGA had turned down the suggestion of close Christian co-operation brought forward by the Quakers and the Anglican Bishop Bell of Chichester. They argued that Catholic aid organisations were not in the position to share their very limited funds. Instead they hoped to establish a Catholic Central Secretariat in London to organise the emigration of ‘non-Aryan’ Catholics to South America.¹⁸⁰ At the launch of the Lord Baldwin Fund, the CCRGA was again urged to participate in joint relief efforts, because the Jewish community could and should not carry this burden alone.¹⁸¹ This time the invitation was not left unanswered. A few days later, Cardinal Hinsley and the general committee of the CCRG agreed to participate in the national appeal of the Lord Baldwin Fund.¹⁸²

The self-imposed outsider position of the CCRG eventually came to an end when Cardinal Hinsley took up negotiations with the GEC in June 1939. Hinsley intended to submit the care for adult refugees to the experienced personnel of the Quaker relief organisation. The Society of Friends had taken care of ‘non-Aryan’ Catholics before the CCRG was established and continued to do so because the CCRGA was

¹⁷⁸ The GEC moved into Bloomsbury House in February 1939 with by then 80 case-workers and almost 14,000 case files. It worked alongside more than twelve Jewish and non-Jewish refugee committees. Hirschfeld: ‘British Non-Jewish Organisations’, p. 608. Gutteridge: ‘Churches and Jews in England’, p. 362.

¹⁷⁹ Shatzkes: *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 253.

¹⁸⁰ Report from the inter-governmental refugee conference in London by Dom Odo of Württemberg, 30.8.1938. AAW, Hi 2 / 84. The sources used do not give away if such a Central Secretariat was established. It rather looks as if emigration to South America was organised by the personnel of the CCRG, especially Fr Quinn, and ultimately Cardinal Hinsley himself. AAW, Hi 2 / 84.

¹⁸¹ Letter Philip Bosworth to Rev. Geraerts, 14.12.1938. Ibidem.

¹⁸² The Lord Baldwin Fund had received the support and approval of Pius XI, apparently through the intervention of Cardinal Hinsley. Minutes of General Committee Meeting, Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany, 19.12.1938. AAW, Hi 2/84. Hinsley also agreed to be represented on the Allocation Committee of the Lord Baldwin Fund. Letter Hinsley to Lord Rankeillour, 3.1.1939. Ibidem.

financially not able to support all Catholic cases.¹⁸³ The co-operation of the Society of Friends with the *Raphaelsverein* in Germany might have been another reason that persuaded the Cardinal to leave Catholic relief work to the Quakers. Hinsley was familiar with the work of the *Raphaelsverein* through Cardinal Faulhaber. At a meeting in Rome in February 1939, the German Cardinal had asked Hinsley and Cardinal Leme of Rio de Janeiro to assist the *Raphaelsverein* by trying to secure more entry visa for 'non-Aryan' Christians.¹⁸⁴ Hinsley hoped that a closer co-ordination of Christian relief work would prevent unnecessary duplication of effort, as the government as well as aid groups in Germany had to deal with only one committee for 'non-Aryan' Christian refugees. An important consideration of Hinsley was of a financial nature: an appeal for funds would be far more effective if issued by a single large, well-known organisation.¹⁸⁵ A final agreement between the GEC and the CCRGA was reached in August 1939. The GEC took over 300 Catholic cases, and the CCRGA promised to raise £2,000 to pay into the funds of the GEC.¹⁸⁶ By then, the CCRGA had assisted about 1,400 people. Although the GEC was now responsible for 'non-Aryan' Catholic adult refugees, Cardinal Hinsley did not lose touch with the Society of Friends and continually affirmed Catholic co-operation where it was needed.¹⁸⁷ The CCRGA meanwhile continued its work caring now for immigrant children and members of religious orders who left Germany due to the growing attacks on Catholic institutions by the National Socialist regime.¹⁸⁸

4.2.1.3 Catholic Public Opinion and Jewish Refugees

Throughout its existence, the CCRGA had considerable difficulties in raising enough money for 'non-Aryan' German and Austrian Catholics. Bishop Williams of

¹⁸³ Leaflet 'Catholic Committee for German Refugees', 13.12.38. BAA, AP/R5 Refugees.

¹⁸⁴ Minutes Bavarian Bishops' Conference, 28-29.3.1939, p. 625. Volk: *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, II, 616-25. On co-operation between the *Raphaelsverein* and the Society of Friends see Leichsenring: 'Rosenstrasse', p. 39.

¹⁸⁵ Minutes GEC Meeting, 27.6.1939. Society of Friends, FCRA / 3.

¹⁸⁶ Cardinal Hinsley nominated two Catholics to join the GEC, Margarete Beer and Fr Quinn as assistant secretary. Fr Quinn was essentially responsible for the spiritual welfare and the conduct of relations with Catholic bodies abroad. Minutes GEC Meeting, 3.10.1939. Society of Friends, FCRA / 3.

¹⁸⁷ Hinsley to Herbert Rowntree, 25.10.1939, asserting his co-operation to help Polish refugees. AAW, Bo 1/103. See also correspondence between Hinsley and Fr Quinn regarding 3,000 visas to Brazil for 'non-Aryan' Catholics. AAW, Hi 2 / 84.

¹⁸⁸ Meeting Report, 26.8.1939. AAW, 1 / 11b.

Birmingham complained to his parish priests about the dismal results of collections in summer 1938:

Unfortunately the response to the Cardinals appeal has been tragically inadequate. The Catholic Committee has not had money enough to relieve Catholic refugees, and many of the Catholic cases have to be dealt with the Society of Friends. It is sad to think that our fellow citizens who are non-Catholics have been more ready than we are to come to the aid of the German refugees.¹⁸⁹

Bishop Williams had shown some understanding for the anti-communism in National Socialist antisemitism in 1933, but in 1938 he actively supported the relief work for 'non-Aryan' Christians. He reminded his community that it had been possible to collect £1,200 two years ago to aid Catholics in South Wales. He was adamant that a similar result should be possible in order to assist the 'non-Aryan' Catholics the hierarchy expected. Williams also reminded his flock of the successful fundraising efforts by Jewish organisations.¹⁹⁰ Only after this prompting did the amount collected almost equal the donations that were given earlier for Welsh Catholics.¹⁹¹

The Church of England had a very similar experience in its effort to mobilise funds for 'non-Aryan' Christians. The National Christian Appeal for Refugees was wound up in 1937 for lack of financial resources. Although Bishop Bell of Chichester immediately replaced the organisation with the Church of England Committee for 'non-Aryan' Christians, he still found the Christian response woefully small in 1938.¹⁹² It was also Bishop Bell who initiated the foundation of the inter-denominational Christian Council for Refugees from Germany in November 1938. This organisation was to fare better financially, mainly because the Church

¹⁸⁹ Leaflet 'Catholic Committee for German Refugees', 13.12.1938. BAA, AP/R5 Refugees.

¹⁹⁰ Williams wrote that had been able to collect £565,000 in the last two months. The money raised by the 330,000 strong Jewish community in Britain was indeed impressive. Between 1933-39 they managed to raise £3 million. Shatzkes: *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 232. According to Richard Gutteridge one fifth of the money raised by the Jewish community was spent on Christians. Gutteridge: 'Some Christian Responses', p. 359.

¹⁹¹ In order to achieve a better result, collections were to take place during mass and priests should send their best collectors around their parishes for private donations. Williams himself started the fund with £100. The collection eventually brought together £1,121. Leaflet 'Catholic Committee for German Refugees', 13.12.1938. BAA, AP/R5 Refugees.

¹⁹² Gutteridge: 'Some Christian Responses', p. 355.

Assembly recommended an allocation of £50,000 from its central funds, so that action could be taken speedily.¹⁹³

The launch of the Lord Baldwin Fund and its national appeal for victims of Hitler's Germany, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, also set off a discussion about Jewish immigration in the British media.¹⁹⁴ In their majority, newspaper columns viewed it with concern, if not with decidedly antisemitic prejudices as in the case of conservative papers.¹⁹⁵ Catholic public opinion did not differ significantly from this general discourse. The pragmatic approach of Cardinal Hinsley that only a centralised, well-funded organisation like the Lord Baldwin Fund would be able to provide for the ever-growing numbers of refugees did not convince Catholics who remained reserved towards the aims of the Fund. Even the bishops, who were suspicious of the national and secular character of the Fund, had to be persuaded to offer Catholic co-operation in its national appeal.¹⁹⁶

The wording of the numerous passionate appeals by Cardinal Hinsley in favour of the Fund indirectly hint at the widespread public reservation that the money raised would largely and undeservedly benefit Jews. The appeals centred around three arguments. The first was a reminder of the papal approval of the Baldwin Fund and the admonition not to indulge in antisemitism:

The Holy Father has laid down for us our attitude towards all those who are suffering through the application of the Aryan Laws. [...] It is not possible for Christians to take part in antisemitism.¹⁹⁷

Secondly, the appeals emphasised the generosity of the Jewish community, not just towards the persecuted Jews, but also towards Christian refugees.¹⁹⁸ Thirdly, Hinsley

¹⁹³ Ibidem, p. 356.

¹⁹⁴ Shatzkes: *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 66.

¹⁹⁵ Shatzkes thinks that the discussion was largely concerned about looming unemployment. However, there were quite a number of articles that were more concerned about the presence of Jews in England, than just unemployment as such. Kushner differentiation between liberal and conservative newspapers is useful in this case. The former displayed mostly sympathy with the persecuted Jews, while the latter (high Tory, Rothermere, Beaverbrook press) tended to fall back on anti-Jewish generalisations. Shatzkes: *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 66. Kushner: *Persistence of Prejudice*, pp. 79-84.

¹⁹⁶ Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 216.

¹⁹⁷ Drafted letter by Hinsley, 8.1.1939. AAW, Hi 2 / 84.

¹⁹⁸ Minutes General Committee Meeting, 19.12.1938. 'Statement of the Refugee Problem Today', AAW, Hi 2 / 84.

had to remind his bishops and priests again and again that 'the majority of the victims who are Jewish by race and Christians by faith, are Catholics.'¹⁹⁹

Even before the launch of the Lord Baldwin Fund, Archbishop Amigo in Southwark only gave his full support to a proposed Catholic refugee relief organisation after he was explicitly reminded that many of the afflicted were Catholics:

I asked his Grace the Archbishop [Amigo] this morning what was his attitude towards the refugee children from Germany and he replied [...] that he would have nothing to do with them. When pointed out that there might be some Catholics among them, he said, that of course we should have to do all we could for Catholic children. This is the Archbishop's policy as far as I could judge.²⁰⁰

Responses addressed to the bishops suggest that some Catholics were concerned that their money should go to Catholics. Some displayed a blatant dislike of Jews. For example, Fr John Power, parish priest at Our Lady of the Rosary in Saltley, wrote in response to the episcopal call for donations to the CCRGA:

I hope however, that the poisonous Jews get none of that collection [sic] and that this really is devoted to the Catholic victims of the 'Straffe'. [sic]²⁰¹

Rev O'Hea of the CSG gave a candid response when Cardinal Hinsley asked how welcome 'non-Aryan' Catholic refugees would be in Oxford:

I may add that I have reports, possibly exaggerated of an apparent reluctance of Catholics to respond to appeals for refugees, either because they fear the appeals may arouse animosity in Germany, or because they are not entirely out of sympathy with the German attitude, or because they fear that some of the money contributed by Catholics may go to help the needs of the people who are not Catholic.²⁰²

The indifference if not hostility encountered by Hinsley in his fund-raising mission is hardly surprising in the light of the public discourse in Catholic newspapers at the

¹⁹⁹ Easter 1939, leaflet from the Catholic Committee for Refugees signed by Hinsley. AAS, War Papers. See also the leaflet 'The Refugees. The plain facts', Society of Friends, FCRA 24 / 8. The emphasis on the Fund's aid for Christians was also made in a letter to *The Times*, 15.1.1939, which was signed by the Cardinal of Westminster, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Moderator of the Federal Council of the Free Churches of England, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland. They also stated that they wholeheartedly supported the Baldwin Fund, 'because the Churches thought it was time they played their part in relieving this great human suffering.'

²⁰⁰ Letter to Dr Calvin by Amigo's secretary, 3.12.1938. AAS, German Refugees. Clifton has suggested that Amigo was cautious about accepting refugees because Basque Catholic refugee children, who had come to Britain in 1937, were used as 'political pawns' in the Spanish Civil War. Clifton: *Amigo*, p. 150. The source as such makes no reference to this experience. It does, however, record Amigo's scepticism that there would be enough funding for refugees.

²⁰¹ John Power to Williams, 9.1.1939. BAA, AP/R5 Refugees.

²⁰² Rev O'Hea to Hinsley, 15.12.1938. CSG, E9 Cardinal Hinsley 1929-41.

time. The *Catholic Times*, for instance, warned that Jewish refugees were alien to the spirit of a Christian country, whose laws and customs they may well exploit for profit, if they did not intend to join forces with anti-Christian Bolshevism.²⁰³ A focus on the Spanish Civil War and the threat of communism, and the renewed debate on a 'Jewish question' as response to events in Germany led to an increase in antisemitic articles in 1938, where most of them blamed the Jews for their own persecution. The appeal of the bishops for financial assistance of relief organisations, however, often remained buried beneath other news or criticised in editorial columns. The editor of the *Catholic Herald*, for instance, commented on one of these advertisements that any financial aid should go first to destitute British Catholics, of whom there were, after all, plenty.²⁰⁴ The common attitude was to offer support for Catholics, but not for Jews as such. With a largely unhelpful Catholic media, and reluctant fellow bishops, Hinsley's aim to awaken the public to the needs of the refugees was bound to be arduous. In a way, Hinsley had to struggle with the consequences of the hierarchy's previous tolerance of antisemitism in the community.

4.3 Summary and Comparison

Catholic co-operation with Jewish organisations conveyed the symbolic message that the English Catholic hierarchy stood by the Jewish community in times of persecution. Historians likewise have not doubted the sincerity and clarity of the condemnation of antisemitism by the English Catholic hierarchy.²⁰⁵ Judged on the basis of Cardinal Hinsley's actions during the war this assessment is certainly justified. It should, however, be remembered that public condemnation of antisemitism, the relief efforts for 'non-Aryan' Catholic refugees, and the co-operation with Jewish organisations only really set in at the end of 1938. Prior, Hinsley and other bishops often turned down Jewish requests for Catholic support with the explanation that the Jews had not stood up for Catholics whenever they had

²⁰³ See, e.g., *Catholic Times*, 15.7.1938, as quoted in Gutteridge: 'Churches and Jews in England', p. 354.

²⁰⁴ *Catholic Herald*, 10.2.1939, p. 8.

²⁰⁵ Tony Kushner acknowledges that Cardinal Hinsley unambiguously spoke against the persecution of the Jews. Kushner: 'James Parkes', p. 456. Gutteridge: 'Some Christian Responses', pp. 352-62.

been persecuted. There was no joint declaration against the persecution of the Jews by the English bishops, but there was likewise no joint silence. If Hinsley felt it was inopportune to support particularist causes in his position as representative of the English Catholic community, other bishops needed not to.²⁰⁶ It was therefore very much in the hands of individual bishops to decide how intense their protest should be. Downey and Mathew were very clear in their rejection of German antisemitic policies from the start and actively worked towards a better understanding between Jews and Christians. Bishop Williams of Birmingham, on the other hand, was willing to consider the idea that Hitler might have legitimate reasons for his action.²⁰⁷ The majority, however, and this includes Cardinal Hinsley, spoke out in protest against any form of persecution, not always referring specifically to the Jews.²⁰⁸ In this respect their pronouncements were not unlike the pastoral announcements of the German bishops. Yet the often cautious and generally very individual response of the English bishops has rarely been interpreted as a sign of antisemitic sentiments. According to Moloney, the 'peculiar flavour' of Cardinal Hinsley's responses to antisemitism and fascism derived from his general refusal to ignore differences between the communities, while being able to transcend these differences by appealing to greater humanity. Moloney does not ignore a possible influence of Hinsley's personal sentiments towards Jews on his activity: 'Hinsley was too honest, possibly too undiplomatic, to claim any specious sympathy with the Jews and he retained to his death the alienation from pure Zionism.'²⁰⁹ Only Kester Aspden has lately pointed to the ideological link between anti-socialism and antisemitism in the worldview of many Catholics, including that of single bishops. He has asserted that the idea of Jewish support for communism was fairly commonplace and could influence cautious Catholic responses to the persecution of the Jews, as in the case of Archbishop Williams.²¹⁰ The same could be said of Archbishop Amigo of Southwark. Although no such comments are recorded of Amigo one might assume that his neglect of the persecution of the Jews was not just motivated by a 'group rationale', according to which threats to the Catholic Church

²⁰⁶ Moloney has suggested that Hinsley refrained from supporting smaller Jewish organisations, because he did not like to be enlisted for 'particularist' causes. Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 206.

²⁰⁷ Quoted in Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 215. Williams is also quoted in the *Catholic Times*, 19.5.1933, p. 1.

²⁰⁸ John Heenan: *Cardinal Hinsley*, London, 1944, p. 221.

²⁰⁹ Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 222.

²¹⁰ Aspden: *Fortress Church*, p. 215.

(e.g., in Spain) took precedence. His correspondence with figures of the right, such as Captain Archibald Ramsay or Douglas Jerrold, and the support expressed for their endeavours to assist Nationalist Spain suggests a broader identification with their cause and certainly a toleration of their antisemitism. Yet the persuasiveness of a Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy did not automatically lead to antisemitic statements or neglect of the persecution of the Jews. The Pro Deo Commission in Liverpool actively nurtured (although it would not publish) Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy theories. Yet Archbishop Downey had not displayed any signs of antisemitism throughout his career despite his strong anti-communism. Instead, he was very vocal in his condemnation of National Socialist antisemitism from 1933.²¹¹ Similarly, Bishop Williams' suspicion about the Jews did not prevent him from supporting Catholic relief work for 'non-Aryan' refugees from Hitler's Germany. In the case of Cardinal Hinsley the response to the persecution of the Jews, Moloney is certainly correct to mention both his personal attitudes towards Jews and the political limitations as representative of the Catholic hierarchy of England and Wales. Before 1938, Hinsley clearly had different preferences. There was his admiration for General Franco and sympathy for Nationalist Spain during the Spanish Civil War, which was shared by most bishops in the years from 1936 to 1938. The oppression of the Catholic Church and its priests in Mexico, Russia and Germany overshadowed, in Hinsley's eyes, the persecution of the Jews. Yet the need to care for 'non-Aryan' Christian refugees from Germany, encouraged by the Vatican, and the brutality of *Kristallnacht* were the last straws that eventually convinced Hinsley to condemn antisemitism and fascism in public. Earlier incidents, such as the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* and the growing sympathy among Catholics in England for fascism likewise pressed the need for a clear episcopal statement on fascism, National Socialism and antisemitism. Hinsley's efforts to aid Jewish refugees, and to improve the relationship between the Christian churches and Jews (often against the opposition of his bishops) do not suggest deep-seated antisemitism.

Anti-Jewish sentiments were more common in Catholic public reactions to the prospect of a growing Jewish immigration to Britain than in episcopal statements.

²¹¹ Ibidem, pp. 214-15.

While Tony Kushner has stressed the negative effects this popular antisemitism had on the immigration policy of British governments, Bernard Wasserstein and Pamela Shatzkes have doubted such a causality. Wasserstein has made a convincing case in arguing that British officials had more pressing objectives to follow, such as maintaining the Empire and fighting a war against Germany, than to follow the whims of public opinion. However, this does not completely leave antisemitism out of the equation. In the case of the CCRGA the long tolerated antisemitism in Catholic public discourse eventually displayed practical ramifications, as Catholics were only reluctantly willing to fund this organisation. Anti-Jewish sentiments were often the source for this reluctance.

There are a number of similarities in the Catholic responses to the Jewish persecution in England when compared to the responses in Germany. There was the long silence on the antisemitic measures of National Socialist Germany at the highest levels of the national hierarchies. Cardinal Hinsley refrained from any public criticism of the German government until 1937, even though he did not have to face a regime with totalitarian ambitions at home. Nevertheless, acquiescence in the face of Hitler's government was practised by both the English and the French Church leadership in order to protect the Catholic Church in Germany and the Vatican's negotiations with the totalitarian regimes in Europe. As in Germany, such a non-interference policy consequently also meant a neutral position on Jewish discrimination and persecution. A striking similarity in this context is the 'tu quoque'²¹² explanation given for this neutrality pointing to the silence of the Jewish communities in the case of Catholic persecution. This opens the question of what role anti-Jewish sentiments played in the behaviour of the Catholic hierarchies. Again, there were considerable parallels. Prejudices against Jews, not just of a religious nature, but also in the form of economic and cultural antisemitism, the suspicion of a link between Jewry and Bolshevism, were partly responsible for the cautious action undertaken by some bishops in England as well as the ambivalent responses by German bishops. A Catholic group rationale and a pre-occupation with anti-Catholicism in Russia, Mexico and Republican Spain were further reasons for the initial insensitivity towards the persecution of the Jews. The English Catholic

²¹² Moloney: *Westminster*, p. 205. Moloney has suggested this attitude reflected the historical and theological tensions between the two communities in the past.

bishops eventually had to deal with the fruit of long-standing anti-Jewish sentiments among Catholics. Hinsley encountered such attitudes in the growing sympathy for fascism amongst Catholics in England as well as in the reluctant charity shown towards 'non-Aryan' Catholic and Jewish refugees. However, antisemitism was not the ultima ratio of the higher clergy in both countries, nor was it of an eliminatory nature, as the scale and brutality of this persecution eventually opened the eyes of the Church leadership in England and Germany. The fundamental difference between both Churches was that only the episcopal leadership in England openly condemned the persecution of the Jews. Moreover, Hinsley extended Catholic co-operation with Jewish and Christian organisations beyond the relief work for 'non-Aryan' refugees and sincerely supported Catholic efforts to improve Christian-Jewish relations.

The limitations imposed by the presence of a dictatorship on the actions of individual German bishops become particularly clear in the absence of similar public condemnations in Germany. Individual Catholic bishops in England had criticised the antisemitic measures in Germany five years before Cardinal Hinsley did without being reprimanded by Hinsley, the Vatican or the British government. They were therefore able to represent a Catholic voice in the general protestations against Hitler's Germany at the time. In Germany, such individual initiatives were rarely (and late) seen through. The bishops felt the need to act unanimously as Catholic hierarchy against the regime and ideally in conjunction with the Protestant churches. Even Bishop Preysing, an outspoken and courageous advocate for episcopal public protests against the regime and its persecution of the Jews, continuously sought the backing of all German bishops until 1943.

Cardinal Hinsley himself is a good example of the relevance of individuals in historic events. More worldly, informal and passionate than his predecessor Bourne, he had become an outspoken, patriotic voice of English Catholicism against fascism and all persecution during the war. In these few years, the Catholic Church in England had opened itself to first ecumenical projects with other Christian groups and the Jewish community. Most of these tender beginnings were reversed under Hinsley's successor Cardinal Heenan. The impetus of the individual is considerably more limited under a dictatorship. Nevertheless one wonders how the German bishops had responded to the persecution of the Jews had not Cardinal Bertram led the hierarchy but Bishop Preysing.

5 Conclusion

Shulamit Volkov's concept of antisemitism being a part of a 'cultural code' has been very helpful for this comparison. Catholics in both countries shared a religious and moral culture. Beyond that, Catholics were British and German citizens, were part of a wider secular society where factors such as class or national policies became also part of a 'cultural code'. Volkov's concept thus serves as an open platform where the influence of all these factors on Catholics' attitudes and behaviour can be considered. In comparison, a purely national or religious framework runs the risk of being self-referential. This extra dimension avoided a linear explanation of modern antisemitism as the result of traditional Catholic anti-Judaism. Instead, it highlights discontinuities and differences in antisemitic attitudes among Catholics.

Two broad questions formed the basis of this thesis. Firstly, how did antisemitic attitudes among Catholics in Germany differ from those in England – and secondly, why? Can general observations on the nature and causes of antisemitism be inferred from this comparison?

This, together with the research object – Catholics – led on to further questions. Did anti-Judaism (for which *We Remember* accepted responsibility) remain unchanged in an age of racial antisemitism? Was it even – together with the acknowledgement of the common roots of Judaism and Christianity – a sign of resistance to the racial image of the Jews in the 1930s? How did Catholicism confront the antisemitism of the Catholic right and that of the nationalist far-right?

One of the main contributions of the present thesis' framework was to dispel the image of a monolithic Catholic community. The Catholic right for instance showed that Catholicism as such was certainly not a bulwark against antisemitism or indeed fascism. But likewise, it was not per se institutionalised Jew-hatred, as the Catholic Worker in England has proven. The absence or virulence of antisemitism was only indirectly determined by religious faith or nationality for that matter. Much more important for the formation of antisemitism was the general public discourse of a society and political socialisation. The broadly similar antisemitic prejudices of

Catholics to that of German or English society in general are the most obvious illustration of this point. An individual's 'cultural code', then, determined the degree of antisemitism within their worldview, exemplified by the upper/middle-class *Rechtskatholik* from a nationalist milieu at one end of the spectrum and the working-class Catholic from a Labour milieu on the other.

5.1 The Nature of Antisemitism

Disregarding the racist extreme right for the time being, the composition of Catholic prejudices against Jews was very similar in both communities and to that of society as a whole. Of the four stereotypes that make up modern antisemitism (religious, economic, racial, cultural) it was the image of the 'Jewish Bolshevik' that drove and at times dominated Catholic hostility towards Jews. Older stereotypes did not vanish. Economic prejudices, for instance, flared up immediately after the war together with allegations of profiteering, or later in response to financial scandals in Weimar Germany. Yet the 'Jewish financier' never sustained the mobilising power enjoyed by the image of the 'Jewish Bolshevik'.

Religious anti-Judaism survived into the age of racial antisemitism and cannot be divorced from modern antisemitism, as the Vatican has suggested in *We Remember*. References to Christian scripture still served to justify secular Jew-hatred. The observation of *We Remember* that the Catholic Church had always rejected discrimination on a racial basis cannot be refuted. However, the claim that Catholics completely rejected race science is too optimistic. Both communities adopted a racial rhetoric where 'race' was defined as the sum of a people's history, culture and religion. Though 'race' was rarely understood in a biological sense, the cultural definition had its own (often seen as insurmountable) determinism, when Jews were described as a distinct and separate race, difficult to assimilate. However, race was generally of secondary importance to the Catholic image of the Jews. It was used to explain social and cultural differences, but did not justify discrimination or persecution in itself.

The Catholic right in both countries was the prism of antisemitism, where Jew-hatred took its most coherent, modern and hostile form. The right's worldview was based on a rejection of parliamentarianism and modern capitalism, the ideal of a corporate society and a veneration of the monarchy (or a controlled dictatorship in the form of Mussolini's Italy). Antisemitism was a constant companion of this worldview. Through their fear of Bolshevism, the 'Jewish Bolshevik' became the central hate-figure. Coupled with the alleged conspiratorial power of 'Jewish finance', these two forces then embodied a fundamental threat to the wealth of the Christian German or English nation in this worldview. The antisemitism of the Catholic right and its anti-parliamentarianism fed on each other, as both groups believed that the current national political system in Germany and Britain would further advance the influence of the Jews either through democratic mass politics in the Weimar Republic, or through the alleged secret party funds and 'gentlemen's agreements' in British politics.

There were differences in the nature and scope of the right's worldview in Germany and Britain despite this ideological convergence. While the majority of the *Rechtskatholiken* hoped for a restoration of the monarchy and aristocracy, Distributism was less reactionary and proposed social and political reforms. Antisemitism was a core element in the worldview of the majority of the *Rechtskatholiken*, whereas in Britain this can only be said to be the case for the authors of *G.K.'s Weekly* or of single individuals in the Catholic Land Movement. The Distributists' antisemitism was nourished by strong anti-establishment sentiments, while that of the *Rechtskatholiken* (being part of the old establishment themselves) was thoroughly *völkisch*. *Rechtskatholiken* did not fear 'the Jew' amongst their peers, but the alleged Jewish influence from below (and from abroad).

The antisemitism of these relatively homogeneous ideological constituencies varied only slightly. The divergence of English Catholics' antisemitism from that of their German co-religionists was more visible among the general Catholic public. The differences lay not so much in the anti-Jewish images themselves, but in the emphasis that was placed on each stereotype, and the overall organisation of antisemitic prejudices. As a result, the nature of Catholic antisemitism in Germany was more secular, more nationalist and more systematic. Essentially, the

antisemitism of German Catholics resembled more a modern ideology both in content and its systematic formulation. Moreover, it was able to permeate a far broader section of Catholic society.

Compared with Germany, Catholic antisemitism in England often had a discernible pre-modern element in it. An examination of the use of religious and racial antisemitic stereotypes, where the latter usually signifies more modern forms of Jew-hatred, it is clear that the religious foundation was more important in England. This could be seen in the fact that missionary work among the Jews was warmly supported by lay Catholics in England. The diametrically opposed attitude to eugenics in both communities is another sign of the relative modernity of German Catholicism. German Catholics such as Hermann Muckermann engaged with modern science and supported positive eugenics. They remained within the boundaries of the Church's teaching that race had no supremacy over the soul, but did endorse racial hierarchy. Even though eugenics was popular in British society as a whole, Catholics (including the Distributists) almost unanimously rejected it as idolatry of the race or unacceptable social engineering.

Nationalism was a constituent part of the right's antisemitism, both in Germany and England. Individual Distributists did not differ too much in their hostility towards the Jews from the *völkisch* antisemitism of the *Rechtskatholiken*. The cause of their anxiety was primarily the 'Jewish Bolshevik', because atheism (or the Jews' alleged hostility to Christianity) and anti-capitalism threatened the very foundations of the Christian nation. However, the specific nationalist motive in cultural antisemitism found less resonance outside the 'Chesterbelloc' circle in England, in marked contrast to Catholics in Germany. A concern about the decline of German Christian culture was common among the episcopate and throughout the educated Catholic middle class. Conservative Catholicism was marked by scepticism towards modernity from the Syllabus of Errors onwards, but the threat of Bolshevik revolution swelled this cultural pessimism.

Following the pattern of public antisemitic outburst, the findings show that in the case of England antisemitism erupted mainly over issues of Catholic interest, such as the persecution of Catholic bishops by Russian Bolshevism, a Jewish state in Palestine, or anti-clerical governments in Mexico and Spain. The furore over the Spanish Civil War climaxed in 1938 and inspired most antisemitic comments at the

time. In Germany, on the other hand, antisemitic reactions were often based on a fear for the nation, regardless of specific Catholic interests.

Finally, German Catholics' image of the Jews was systematised to a higher degree. Catholic publications adopted a twofold antisemitism as a common formula when commenting on 'Jews' or the 'Jewish question'. The distinction between the 'good' religious Jews and the 'immoral' liberal Jews allowed a Christian defence against the influence of the latter, but prohibited an undifferentiated discrimination against all Jews. English Catholicism did not create a uniform answer to a 'Jewish question'. The responses depended much more on an individual's personal concerns. This could take the form of the hostile nationalism of *G.K.'s Weekly*, or the zeal of the Catholic Guild of Israel to convert as many Jews as possible, or the popular tendency to equate Jews with communists. In their content, these answers to a 'Jewish question' might not have differed significantly from those given by German Catholics, but they lacked the cohesion of a set formula. Outside the 'Chesterbelloc' circle, antisemitism was not ideologised to the same degree as in German Catholicism. Even comparing the most antisemitic sections of the two communities, the Catholic right, the *Rechtskatholiken* were more systematically organised than their English counterparts. Links to and co-operation with far-right, pro-fascist groups were, for instance, almost institutionalised in the *Rechtskatholiken's* support for the *Stahlhelm* and the DNVP. In England, such contacts were only cultivated on the basis of individual Distributists' membership in such groups.

5.2 The Distribution of Antisemitism

The most prolific promoters of antisemitism in both communities were those on the Catholic right fringe, the *Rechtskatholiken* and Distributists respectively. Their organisational structure focused on re-education, i.e., a media presence and active lobbying, rather than on party politics. *Rechtskatholiken* were largely members of the Catholic nobility, upper middle class civil servants and academics. Antisemitism also found eager listeners among German Catholic students, academics and the lower middle class and did not differ, therefore, from German society as such. Distributists found their supporters among Catholic writers, the educated middle class and the

self-employed. The clergy, too, were prone to anti-Jewish attitudes. From the sources available it seems that Catholic working-class organisations of both communities were least likely to engage in antisemitic abuse. However, compared with the clear condemnation of antisemitism by the Young Christian Workers, their counterparts in Germany were more ambivalent in their public rejection of antisemitism.

There was a curious and counter-intuitive development in Catholic England, which also constitutes the most striking difference between the two cases. Until 1933 there were similar patterns of antisemitic outburst in both communities, although their intensity was considerably greater in German Catholic publications. Yet in 1938/39, at the height of Jewish persecution in pre-war Germany, antisemitism in Catholic England was more widespread than at any time in the period concerned by the thesis. German Catholicism on the other hand gradually had reduced its public attacks on Jews from as early as 1924.

The first wave of antisemitism in response to Russian Bolshevism, the war and the revolutions in Germany affected most sections of Catholic society in both countries. The Catholic press was the prime outlet for anti-Jewish sentiments. Apart from the press, antisemitism was also evident in England among the conservative Catholic Trade Union under Thomas Burns and members of the clergy, though it was rarely found within the Catholic Social Guild or the publications of the Young Christian Workers. In Germany, by contrast, antisemitism could be found across all sections of Catholicism, from the Catholic Workers' Association in southern Germany (in moderation), academic and student organisations, the educated middle classes, influential members of the hierarchy, the Catholic parties and the *Rechtskatholiken*. Then, in the late 1930s, the balance shifted and antisemitism seemed to be more acute among Catholics in England than in Germany. The newspapers were full of hostile articles against Jews, Catholic publishing houses took a pro-fascist stance and more bishops began to sympathise with 'Latin' fascism and sometimes anti-Jewish sentiments. This picture is, however, distorted. It was a result of the fact that the most vocal sections of intellectual English Catholicism had thrown their weight behind fascism in 1936-38. The confrontation with communism and fascism split public opinion. The pro-fascist antisemitic wave was largely ridden by the 'Chesterbelloc' circle and the remnants of Distributism because of their personal ties spanning the extreme right, Catholic lay organisations, newspaper editorial boards

and the hierarchy. Their popularity among the Catholic middle class and the discontented lower middle class led to a considerable decline of Catholic Social Guild audience and as a result the anti-fascist (and moderately anti-socialist) opposition was rendered impotent.

In stark contrast to this development, antisemitism noticeably receded in the German Catholic press from the mid-1920s and political Catholicism began to confront National Socialism by 1930. Catholic Workers' Associations and the Christian Unions were now the least likely to publicise antisemitic views. It was in fact in Germany where Catholicism undertook the stronger efforts to contain the right. Political Catholicism was assisted to some extent by the bishops, who issued warnings for Catholics to join para-military organisations, such as the *Jungdeutsche Orden* and the *Stahlhelm* in the mid-1920s and condemned Catholic membership of the NSDAP after 1931.

No such attempts to contain the Catholic right were made by Catholics on the other side of the channel, nor was there a clear public ecclesiastical condemnation of home-grown fascism, with the result that many Catholics joined the British Union of Fascists. Unlike the situation in Germany, the Catholic right, especially the editors of *G.K.'s Weekly*, was supported and recommended by members of the hierarchy, clergy and Catholic newspapers. Contacts and collaboration with pro-fascist organisations were tolerated by the hierarchy as a joint defence effort against communism.

This was not how the story ended. Antisemitism was eventually more openly and more vehemently condemned by English ecclesiastic leaders from the end of 1938. By contrast, the mutual antipathy between the *Rechtskatholiken* and the conservative sections of the Catholic leadership began to erode by 1931/32, when the equally mutual fear of Bolshevism opened the doors of political Catholicism to the *Rechtskatholiken*. Like the conservative parties in Weimar Germany, these Catholic leaders converged on the right, a tendency that had swayed the Centre Party since the election of Msgr Kaas as its leader in 1928.

There is need for some explanation. First, an explanation is needed to understand the differences in the nature and distribution of antisemitism in both communities.

The relative modernity and scope of anti-Jewish sentiments among German Catholics was partly the result of the long public debate on the 'Jewish question' in Germany. While Catholic publications referred to Jews mostly in a religious context until the early nineteenth century, their interpretation of the 'Jewish question' grew more secular and modern throughout this debate. By the 1920s, when German Catholicism was eager to leave its ghetto, antisemitism was no longer seen just as a defence of Catholic interests (as it had been during the *Kulturkampf*), but of national interests. In addition, the existence of two Catholic parties and a tightly woven net of Catholic organisations aided the dissemination of antisemitism – be it from the population to the Catholic leadership or vice versa. The effectiveness of this network was particularly apparent in the early antisemitic wave after the war, for which the Catholic parties have to take considerable responsibility. They continued and popularised the antisemitism of the nationalist right of Imperial Germany, which was weakened by the disarray of these groups immediately after the war.

That the answer of English Catholicism to the 'Jewish question' was less systematic was due to its thinly developed and more recent organisational structure. English Catholicism was even in its most fundamental organisational structure – the hierarchy – still very young. There was no Catholic political party and a network of social or political organisations was only just developing. The Church had concentrated on building churches and schools and recruiting priests, and had encouraged the creation of pious rather than political lay organisations. Before the existence of the 'Chesterbelloc' circle in the 1920s/30s, Catholic thinkers outside the walls of the churches or the universities were few and far between. The post-war years were therefore the time when the first intense Catholic discussion of the 'Jewish question' outside theology took place. Hence, the interpretation of the 'Jewish question' was less likely to settle on a common formula like 'twofold antisemitism' in German Catholicism.

The different responses to the antisemitism of the radical right were the result of differences in Catholic organisation: political Catholicism in Germany's case and social Catholicism in England's case. Since the national hierarchies had begun to retreat from social and political issues (apart from the education question) into a spiritual realm in the late 1920s, the task of representing Catholics on a secular

platform fell to lay organisations. With its well-organised political arm in the Centre Party and BVP, German Catholicism was much better equipped to stand its ground in secular affairs than English Catholicism. The vacuum left by the hierarchy in England on the other hand was filled by Distributism. As a social movement – if not simply a journalistic enterprise – it was much less restricted in its use of antisemitism than a political party, which had to act with one eye on its electorate and the other on its political competitors. A political party can function as potential amplifier of antisemitism (as was indeed the case for the Centre and BVP in the early years of the Weimar Republic), but in England's case it was more the absence of a political structure, and the late formation of a Catholic workers' organisation that left anti-communist and anti-Jewish voices uncontested on a public platform in 1938.

The Centre Party still dominated Catholic public discourse. Their ambiguous answer to the 'Jewish question' had an important conciliatory character, expressed in the hope that Jews would eventually assimilate and that Catholics would prove patient while the process of assimilation was completed (such a tone was absent from interpretations of the 'Jewish question' by the Catholic right and even the BVP). However, the problem of an ambiguous attitude towards Jews became eventually obvious in the failure to denounce antisemitism clearly. Political Catholicism challenged the right on a political platform, but it was no challenge to the right's ideological antisemitism, precisely because its answer to the 'Jewish question' remained too ambiguous. The long history of the discourse, its standardised form and the widespread use created a pattern that was difficult to escape.

5.3 Antisemitism and Catholic Relations with the Right

Antisemitism was not the main factor influencing Catholicism's attitude towards the right. Party politics, national politics and finally the Vatican play a much more immediate role. Antisemitism ebbed away in German Catholic public discourse in the later 1920s partly because anti-Jewish propaganda had become the domain of political Catholicism's political opponents, the DNVP and NSDAP. The Vatican's tolerance of Hitler's government after the Concordat in 1933 was an important factor in the German hierarchy's early acquiescence in the regime and Cardinal Bourne's

and Cardinal Hinsley's silence about Hitler's government and its antisemitic policies. Finally, a minority position of Catholic communities and the memory of anti-Catholic discrimination inevitably affected Catholic responses to national politics. The war between both countries gave Hinsley the opportunity to express English Catholicism's loyalty to Britain, while the conflict complicated the situation for the German bishops, as any criticism of the regime would necessarily be interpreted as defeatist and give rise to anti-Catholic campaigns.

All these factors constituted the framework which limited or supported Catholic activities against Jew-hatred and cannot, therefore, be disregarded. However, frameworks are only man-made. The convergence on the right in Germany cannot be explained without an ideological affinity between the right and conservative Catholicism, with anti-Bolshevism as the basic uniting factor. Beyond that, Catholic intellectuals, the bishops, religious communities, and the Catholic youth movements yearned for a spiritual rebirth of Germany and celebrated a spiritual/religious community. They connected with the Catholic right on this level (quite literally, as many had personal contacts with the nationalist right). Indeed in both communities, the Catholic right received considerable support from Catholic leadership. The English hierarchy supported Ramsay's Anti Alien Bill or the right-wing aid group Friends for National Spain, while the *Rechtskatholiken* were eventually invited onto the stage of mainstream German Catholicism, i.e., to the *Volksverein* and the *Katholikentage* in 1932. In both cases, antisemitism was a constituent part of the right's worldview, which requires some explanation of the role it played in attracting Catholic support or enthusiasm.

In his study on British fellow travellers of fascism and National Socialism, Richard Griffiths has already stressed that antisemitism was – in the worst cases – a central motive for joining the nationalist right. At the very least, according to Griffiths, antisemitism was not a deterrent against many fellow travellers lending their support to pro-fascist groups. The Catholic communities in both countries were no exception to Griffiths' observation. Antisemitism played an important role in the worldview and indeed in the activities of the Catholic right. Contacts with the nationalist right often included the search for a 'solution' to the 'Jewish question', with which they identified or did not reject. Fellow travellers of the Catholic right welcomed the

determination of the nationalist right to deal with communism and the ambition to re-spiritualise the all-too materialist modern world. On many occasions it is not possible to trace the fellow travellers' co-operation or tolerance back to antisemitic motivation. Clearly, however, Jew-hatred was not dishonourable an activity enough to deter them in their support. This gave the Catholic right additional credibility and exposure, and at the same time weakened Catholic organisations that were committed to tolerance and democracy. Fellow travellers might not have incited an anti-Jewish atmosphere with their own words, but their activities nevertheless indirectly perpetuated antisemitism in the public sphere. Moreover, in the time of a racist dictatorship and Jewish persecution, merely written or verbal antisemitism (in contrast to open violence or discrimination) present in the Catholic public discourse had quite physical consequences for the persecuted Jews, as material aid was only reluctantly given by Catholics in Germany and England.

Historiography on Catholic antisemitism has taken considerable care to distinguish anti-Judaism from modern antisemitism, acknowledging a religious hostility towards Jews, but rejecting a racial determination of the Jews. It has been obvious throughout this thesis that religious and modern anti-Jewish prejudices cannot be cleanly separated from each other, and neither were religious and racial concepts of the Jews an irreconcilable paradox. Religious prejudices, often seen as the least hostile description of the Jews, did little to encourage Catholic solidarity with modern Jewry. The Catholic defence against Rosenberg, for instance, made clear that religious teaching did not necessarily transfer respect for ancient Jewry to modern Jewry. The formula of a 'twofold antisemitism' separated modern Jewry from the more positive image of the Chosen People in the Old Testament and left it to the racial policies of the National Socialist state. In England, too, the Catholic Guild of Israel employed modern antisemitic arguments for their cause, and (as with the defence against Rosenberg) blurred the boundary between race and religion. Religious anti-Judaism was not a barrier to modern antisemitism at all. Rather it formed the basis on which to build modern prejudices. Of all stereotypes, the religious one has been the most enduring. It persisted in the face of Jewish persecution (for example in the comments expressed by German bishops on the deportation of the Jews) and still served as an explanation for the Holocaust after the

war, when mass murder was interpreted as the result of god's curse on the Chosen People.

This continuity of traditional anti-Jewish sentiments should not obscure the relevance of the allegations of Jewish Bolshevism or financial dominance that lent antisemitism a new urgency in the interwar years. Against the background of Catholic anti-socialism, these stereotypes helped to convince a far broader section of German and English Catholic society of the reality of a 'Jewish danger' than had been the case before. All these prejudices did not just ostracise 'the Jew', but they also proved to be bridge-builders between the radical right and the Catholic right and eventually conservative Catholicism.

Appendix

Table 1

YEAR	ARTICLES PER MONTH		
	<i>Catholic Herald</i>	<i>Catholic Times</i>	<i>The Month</i>
1918	0.50	0.00	0.00
1919	1.08	1.33	0.00
1920	0.67	1.17	0.25
1921	1.00	1.75	0.75
1922	1.43	2.33	1.13
1923	1.88	0.86	0.75
1924	1.44	0.93	0.60
1925	1.29	1.00	0.60
1926	1.86	0.81	0.67
1927	1.17	0.63	0.67
1928	1.33	0.44	0.68
1929	1.50	0.25	0.69
1930	1.25	0.33	0.70
1931	1.00	0.42	0.71
1932	1.66	0.50	0.71
1933	2.33	2.38	1.00
1934	1.5	1.44	0.63
1935	0.67	0.50	0.25
1936	0.72	2.00	0.75
1937	0.78	3.50	0.88
1938	0.83	5.00	1.00
1939	2.00	2.00	1.00

Recorded were articles containing an anti-Jewish mention. The numbers per year are derived from the numbers of articles per year divided by the months examined (e.g., Catholic Herald 1929: 9 articles in 6 months).

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